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BOUGHT FROM THE
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BEQUEATHED BY
CAROLINE EUSTIS PEABODY
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LEONI DI MONOTA:

AND

OTHER POEMS,

BY

JAMES BARRON HOPE.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1857.

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I.

THE MIRROR.

EACH heart the Carnival delights
With gala shows and splendid sights,
And sumptuous festival invites
Verona's damsels and her knights;
For Prince Monota bids them all
This night to revel in his hall.
And dames and maidens now require
Their richest gear and best attire—
Their coronets begirt with plumes—
And ev'ry knight and ev'ry squire,
Demands attention from his grooms.

And Beatrice Valdarno sits
Beneath the hands of Linda, now,
While she her fav'rite maiden fits
The golden circle on her brow.
And Beatrice looks well to-night,
Her silken hair's rich perfum'd curls
All deck'd with gems and crown'd with pearls,
But Linda is—a dream of light—
The fairest of her household girls.
And slowly Linda twin'd each tress,
Pausing full oft, as if to gaze
In homage on the loveliness,
Which had been sung in many lays
Beneath pale Dian's silver rays.
Careful and slow the maiden's hands
Braided each tress of ebon hair;
If *she* should tread no sarabands,
At least *her* Lady would be there.
For Prince Monota was her sire—
His name to all Verona known:
And he, 'twas thought, might well aspire
Some day to take the Ducal throne.

The Lady's Lord waits till the task
Is done, to lead his wife so fair
Unto her noble father's masque,
And leans upon her gilded chair.
As thus above her form he leant,
His locks with Linda's tresses blent;
And Linda shrank not from his side,
Nor closer drew her robe's loose fold,
Nor to repress his glances tried,
Which were too lover-like and bold.
In sooth! 'twas wrong that such as he
With one so fair should make so free!
In sooth! 'twas wrong, and scarcely wise,
To gaze with such impassion'd eyes!

Obliquely, stood a mirror broad,
Reflecting Lady, Maid, and Lord,
Like some still lake's unruff'd wave,
Its surface faithful picture gave.
It show'd the Lady in her pride—
Her perfum'd tresses floating wide,
Darker than any midnight tide;
Her crimson lips, her snowy brow,
Her cheeks flush'd like a sunset sky;—

And never did unspoken vow
Gleam from a more resplendent eye!
And Linda, with her long, fair curls—
Her girlish form, and eyes of grey,
Was fair as lily that unfurls
When midnight dreams of coming day.
A blooming girl—a woman too—
A blossom blown, yet damp with dew,
Still damp with April morning's dew.
And e'en the Cyprian's statue-bride,
When life woke in each marble limb—
In all her dreamy beauty's pride
By Linda had looked cold and dim;
Whose youthful loveliness was rife
With all the vivid charms of life,
Contrasting marvellously well,
With the dark beauty 'neath her hand—
She, form'd to weave love's magic spell—
Valdarno's wife, grave, proud and grand.
And love to her was but as sand
Beaching the sea of her command,
Where footprints frequently had been,
But only for a moment, seen;—
And these footprints upon that beach,

Were made by shipwreck'd men whose art
Could ne'er the sunny valleys reach

Hid deep within her heart—

Where flowers fair, or pois'nous smil'd,

All tangled in confusion wild.

Love, too, to Linda, was as sand,

But in life's hour-glass held each grain,

That glass once empty in her hand,

Could never be refill'd again.

And both were beautiful: but oh!

Their beauty differed far and wide,

As rosy sunlight on the snow,

From summer's blushing vintage pride.

And Lord Valdarno, leaning there,

Upon his lovely Lady's chair,

Had all the lines of lordly race

Bleat in his proud patrician face;

Which varied with a flush uncertain

As, that which in the window-place

At night falls thro' some crimson curtain,

With haughty lip whose dark beard made

Still deeper red the other glow—

As holly-leaf with darksome shade,
Relieves the berry hid below.
Trick'd out in velvet, slash'd and lac'd,
He stood beside his Lady's chair;
One jewell'd hand upon it plac'd—
The other long and slim and fair,
Was wrongfully dispos'd elsewhere.
And well might Beatrice feel proud
Of him, for in the noblest crowd
His form would win admiring glance;
And wielding sword, or couching lance,
He still was first, as in the dance.
And he, who on her carv'd chair leant,
Was lov'd as well as she could love,
A passion in which pride was blent—
More of the falcon than the dove!

The Mirror, like a tranquil wave,
From its bright surface picture gave—
A picture life-like in its truth—
Of these three, lovely in their youth!
The Lady gave a sidelong glance—
She thought upon the fete, perchance—
Upon the masque—upon the dance,

If these her thoughts, why should she start,
And press her hand upon her heart?
She started, Linda started, too,
Valdarno hastily withdrew
The circling arm which had been plac'd
Too boldly round the maiden's waist.
And thus he spoke: "What, frighten'd, sweet,
"I hear your very heart's quick beat,
"Like sound of fairy-dancer's feet!"—
"'Twas nothing: save that Linda's hand
"Had press'd the coronet too much,—
"And surely she should understand
"It was by far too rude a touch."
And this was all the Lady said;
The pressure on her faultless head,
Explain'd the beating of her heart,
And gave excuse for that wild start.
Yet, if 'twas as the lady said,
Why should she change from pale to red?
Why should her eyes emit fierce flashes,
Beneath their long, dark, silken lashes?
The blood flow'd back thro' Linda's veins,
Thro' ev'ry art'ry in her form,

Like torrents when the heavy rains
Have swell'd them from some summer storm.
Her face, a moment all so white,
Resum'd its hue, her eye its light:
And the deep breath her bosom gave,
Made e'en her Lady's tresses wave.
Upon Valdarno then she turned
The eyes that late were all affright,
Which now in tumultuous delight
With too much tender lustre burn'd.
One white hand press'd the circlet's clasp
The other sought again his grasp; -
And then, with motion strange, I wist!
The maiden turn'd — Valdarno kiss'd —
And Beatrice, with side-long glance,
That seem'd the look of dream, or trance,
Gaz'd in the tell-tale Mirror's plate,
With eyes that spoke terrific hate.
How strange the hidden ways of Fate!
And 'tis the curse of sin, that chance —
A thoughtless word — a careless glance —
May bring to light the crime that we
Thought buried deep in secrecy.

The tiring-woman's task complete,
The Lady started to her feet;
Strange that she could obliterate
That look of more than human hate!
But now in gems and silken sheen
She smiling stood, a very queen.
The-regal brow, the flashing eye—
The lip, the cheek of crimson dye—
The sable tresses, show'ring down
Beneath her pearl-enameled crown—
Her form of glory and of pride,
Which sculptor hands had oft defied
When but to mimic it they tried,—
Seem'd that of one half deified.
Then to her noble Lord she spoke,
In accents soft as breath of June;
Or, silv'ry string of lute when woke
To thrill some soft liquescent tune,
When dim and pale, the setting moon
Is mirror'd in the still lagoon.
These were her words: "Valdarno, wait,
"Anon, my love, I'll seek you out—
"An-hour hence, 'twill scarce be late,
"Then for the revel and the rout!"

“And Linda,” here the Lady smil’d,
“Perhaps my hot words gave you pain—
“About the coronet, my child;
“Such you shall never hear again!”
She gather’d up her silken gown,
Valdarno with his stately grace,
Held back the door, nor saw a frown
Upon his Lady’s radiant face.

Beneath the stillest river’s flow,
May hideous snakes swim to and fro,
And pois’nous water-blossoms grow.
In India’s jungles, too, I ween—
Albeit quiet and serene
They wave perpetually green,—
May crouching tigers yet be seen;
And fruits and buds of richest glow
Have, as in days long passed, you know,
Hidden the deadly asp below.
So, in the mind, and in the heart,
May fearful passion’s lurk the while:
But hidden by the polish’d art,
That gives the loving glance and smile,

When on the red lips' rich perfume,
Hangs portent of a sudden doom;
When subtile words mean double things—
Ingenious threats which none can see—
Defiance which the wrung heart flings,
When curses struggle to be free.

When Beatrice had gone, what pass'd,
'Tis scarcely meet I should tell o'er;
But they methinks had stood aghast,
Had they behind yon drap'ried door,
But known of her, who silent took
With eager ears, and savage eyes,
A burning mem'ry of each look—
His vows, her passionate replies.
Close to his side the maiden press'd,
Pillow'd her head upon his breast;
Nor reck'd she that each throb within,
Was one of guiltiness and sin.

And Beatrice saw his caresses—
Heard each impassion'd word and vow—
Saw him now kiss her floating tresses—
Her offer'd lips, and upturn'd brow.

She mark'd her eyes of tender light,
That softly burn'd like lamp at night,
When thro' its shade it glows and starts,
And dying never, quite departs.
She heard him say, within an hour,
That he would leave the masque and dance
To seek his Linda in their bow'r,
Where scarce the quiet stars could glance;
He car'd for nought on earth but her—
The heart she heard—which she had won,
Was that of Persian worshipper,
And fervid as the Persian's sun!
And Linda listen'd to these vows,
As tho' she were a new-made spouse.
Her fingers 'mid his long locks play'd,
Press'd closer to him all the while.
Then her arms white, stole 'round the knight,
With such a blush, and such a wile,
And such a woman's winning smile,
That had he been an anchorite
In place of peer for feast bedight,
He still had kiss'd her all the same,
And whisper'd tenderly her name.

A moment more the Lady gaz'd,
And tho' methinks she was amar'd,
Yet cautiously her gown she rais'd,
Lest the faint rustle of her dress,
Should break the chamber's silentness:
Then the proud Lady tipp'd away,
A moment more, they heard her coming,
And strange! it was a roundelay,
That she so merrily was humming.
Thus warn'd, the lovers drew apart—
And Linda took a velvet spencer
That folded up, with ready art
She fill'd anew the golden censer.
The Lord snatch'd up a 'lumin'd book;
And holding it revers'd the while,
Turn'd on the maid a tender look,
Which she repaid him with a smile—
Kiss'd her small fingers white as snow
And sportive strove the kiss to throw.

Then with a slide, a glide, and bound,
The Lady stood within the room;
But on her face there was not found
A solitary shade of gloom—

Fair, smiling, and serene was she—
Save the slight flush upon her brow,
Tranquil as any moonlit sea
Unbroken by an oar or prow.
Still holding up her 'broider'd dress,
She stood, one little foot advanc'd;
A foot which could as lightly press,
As those on which Calypso danc'd!
Aye! she was full of loveliness
As any vision that e'er glanc'd
On opiate-dreamer when entranc'd—
When on his golden slumber gleams
A thousand soft, celestial dreams!
The hand that held her rich robe blaz'd
With gems that glitter'd in their sheen;
And with her splendid brow uprais'd,
She stood and looked in truth a Queen.
She gave her lord a tender look—
Said: "Ladies never were in time;
"And wonder'd if his painted book
"Was not some dreamy lover's rhyme?
"'Twas time, too, to be gone, in sooth!
"Her own Leoni would be there;

“And would upbraid her, silly youth!
“The moment that she should appear.”

Leoni was Monota's son;
Her brother: twins they were, and few
Were they who had not deem'd them one —
So very like they were to view.
He had been exil'd; but his fame,
And potent friends, had from his name
Wip'd out what he esteem'd a shame.
And he to-night, from other lands
Was coming, so his courier said
With honors crown'd, reap'd by his hands,
On fields where lay the new-mown dead.
And thus it was Monota gave
The splendid revel, which that night
Conven'd the lovely and the brave,
To welcome home the gallant knight.
And Beatrice most wildly well
Did love that second self of hers:
And late, had long'd to hear him tell
How he had won his golden spurs.
But scarce a thought of him dwelt now,
Beneath her gem-encircled brow;

Although she was indeed most proud
Of his rare beauty and his strength.
And when secluded from the crowd,
Would praise his soft locks' wondrous length —
Call him her glass — say that his face
Had all his sister's winning grace; —
A thousand sportive things like these,
Would say when seated on his knees.
In spring-time such, her native pride —
A heavy cloak — was laid aside.
O'er others she might sternly reign,
With him she was a child again —
She 'd tell old tales, and hum the airs,
Which they had sung when mountaineers —
When children they in idle play
Had — at a castle far away,
And lone, and desolate, and grey —
Disported all the livelong day.
But now; such woman's thoughts as these
Within her bosom stern would freeze;
Or, stand at best like winter trees,
With not a note among the boughs
Where birds had lately warbled vows —

With not a leaf on any limb—
But melancholy, stern, and grim.
Be sure the Lady's heart was hard
When Leoni was from it barr'd!

Now with her crimson cloak and hood,
Fair Linda by the Lady stood:
And still the fair dame talked the while
With radiant look and sunny smile—
All fair above—all fierce below—
The flame beneath cold Hecla's snow!
Thus spoke she to her noble spouse:
"I claim this night as all my own,
"But fear not that I'll list to vows
"Breath'd even in the softest tone."
Valdarno, tho' well-pleas'd, in sooth,
Made her a gay and gallant speech—
Such as the "world" in early youth,
Will to its polish'd vot'ries teach.
He said: "When absent from the side
"Of her, his life, his light, his pride—
"That his fond heart ebb'd faint and low—
"The moments were so sad and slow—
"His spirits but an unstrung bow."

As speaking thus, he glanc'd aside,
The Lady knew the Noble lied:
But 'twould have been scant courtesy
To tax him with his perfidy!
And so she listen'd all the while,
With tranquil gaze and dazzling smile:
Then clasp'd her hands upon her breast
And look'd up in his face,
Then court'sied low, as if in jest -
To show her matchless grace,
To Linda then the Lady spoke,
Patting her cheek with playful stroke.
Said that she need no vigil keep,
And prophecied a dreamless sleep.
The while she spoke with perfum'd breath,
She could have dealt her maiden death
Oh! lips and eyes can lie and cheat!
And words that ring so low and sweet.
Oft syllable some dark deceit.
And kisses, too; — the olive's shade
Of old saw more than man betray'd.

The flambeaux gleam with ruddy glow
As forth the Lord and Lady go.

And servitors went on before,
Each with his flaring torch,
Which flung uncertain glimmers o'er
Full many a sculptur'd porch.
And all along the changing light
Fell on historic walls,
Round which the gloom of moonless night,
Was wrapp'd like sable-palls.
They gain Monota's palace proud,
The Lady leaves his side;
Valdarno mingles with the crowd,
Nor long will he abide.
To him the Masque is poor and tame
He cares not for the dance:—
He misses not his stately dame,
Nor her bewitching glance.
He cares not for the music's swell—
Upon his heart 's a deeper spell
Than melody has ever flung,
Since first the stars together sung.
He thinks of one who waits for him,
Where stars are peeping, pale and dim;—
Of one, who ~~tho'~~ alas! not wed,
Still listens for his well-known tread

While thus Valdarno loung'd about
Amid the gay and gallant rout,
His Lady from the hall sped out—
She sought an ancient crone, her nurse,
Who heard her tale with mutter'd curse,
And they, their heads together bent,
Up a broad marble stairway went.
What further pass'd, I cannot say,
Save that they sought a chamber then;
“What there transpir'd?” if still you ask,
I know not. Presently, two men
Came forth with mantle and with mask;
Swift down the sumptuous stair they glide—
They gain the court—the archway wide—
And soon are lost adown the street,
That scarcely echoes to their feet.

II.

THE DUNGEON.

Down the long, vaulted corridor,
With guards behind and guards before,—
The Ducal guards—perhaps a score—
Cometh a knight most bravely dress'd,
With jewell'd orders on the breast
Of his dark crimson gala-vest;
While clouds of costly laces float
Around his shoulders and his throat.
Most splendidly he is array'd,
Save, that his baldric bears no blade.
And this same young and gallant knight—
So sumptuously is bedight,
That he, himself most surely dress'd
With all these orders on his breast,
For some high festival, and not
To spend the night in *such* a spot.

The jailor found a rusted key,
And then by dint of hand and knee,
Forc'd back the ponderous door that swung
Upon its hinges with a sound
That echoed dismally around.
He lighted next, an iron lamp
Which feebly glimmer'd in the gloom,
For that deep vault was cold and damp
As sleeping Romeo's silent tomb.
Seeming in thickest haze to swim
The taper's light was cold and dim,
And fell on walls so rude, and grim,
That they had sicken'd all, but him —
The knight so pale — and proud — and slim —
Of splendid brow and faultless limb,
Who now, perchance, through haughty whim
Bade his dark guide "the taper trim."
His voice was rich; and left his mouth
As 'twere with perfume from the South;
And yet, its tone of proud command,
'Twas said, but few could e'er withstand.
And voices: (I have found it so)
Have even in their tutor'd flow

Expression, which the thoughtful trace
As others read upon the face.
And his, tho' he had spoken love,
Show'd him—if I may use the phrase—
An iron hand in silken glove—
A hawk with plumage of the dove.—
And in his dark eyes falcon blaze
Was all that dreamy maidens praise.

Speaking, within the room he strode
Allotted as his stern abode.
A table old, and stain'd and dark,
Bearing full many a name and mark,
Stood in the floor; a record it!
For it was thickly overwrit
With names—and sometimes sombre wit—
The names were names of men long sped,
And this the only thing which told
How gallants brave, alas! long dead,
Had suffered in this damp and cold,
Dark, dreary prison, which to-night
Yawned welcome to the Lord who came
Within it to record his name,

If so he chose in weary mood
To cheat an hour of solitude.

The gaunt rats at the noble's tread
Sought refuge in the unused bed,
From which one gaz'd with fi'ry eyes
In mingled terror and surprise;
For half a score of years had pass'd
Since that grim portal open'd last.
The knight look'd round; still calm, and cold,
Then drawing forth a purse of gold,
Quoth he: "Sir knave, this place for me?"
"It illy suits with my degree—"
"A fitter room—and this for thee."
He shook it thrice: the jailor turn'd—
Be sure the ducats soon were earn'd.

The chamber which the knight next gain'd
Was ample; and tho' rent and stain'd
Its furniture was better—he
Had for his couch e'en draperie!
Now said the knight: "Wouldst win a prize?
"Ducats by thousands realize?"

"I ask of thee a simple thing—

"Earnest of payment take this ring—

"'Twould pay the ransom of a king,

"And now may lend to me a wing:

"Thy head would answer? tush! man think!

"Well: then if from the deed you shrink

"'Twill purchase parchment, pens and ink."

He held forth now the priceless ring:

Priceless indeed! a rugged thing!

So that the jailor gave a groan

To see its simply clouded stone,

Engrav'd with some device and line,

 Cut in it deep and strong,

To him it seem'd a cup of wine,

 With couplet from a song.

The knight's keen eyes could not but mark

The change upon his features dark,

And then he look'd upon the ring;

'Twas strange! so very small a thing

Should to *his* forehead upward bring

The ruddy blood. He mutter'd low

Laugh'd a strange laugh, and then said "no!"

While with a hand assur'd and slow

He from his long, white finger drew
A gem, bright as a drop of dew
Catching the golden moon's full light
On some serene mid-summer night.
"And now begone, but sirrah, think!
"To-morrow bring me pens and ink!"

The heavy doors together jar,
And then are locked with bolt and bar.
The sound died out. Deep silence fell
Upon that isolated cell.
The knight sank in his oaken chair—
Flung back the masses of his hair
And smote upon his forehead fair.
His eyes might well the fiends invoke
As his deep voice the silence broke:
Such bitter words as these he spoke:
"Fool! fool! ay fool! and thrice ill starr'd!
"Life's brilliant prophecies are marr'd!
"My doom no skill can now retard.
"And double curses on the chance
"That brought me hitherward from France,
"Unback'd by sword, or axe, or lance.

“When I had spears thick as the pines
“That cluster on the Appenines.
“How strange a thing man’s life may be!
“That blow well struck, has stricken me.
“My race is run! My sun is set!
“Dark Stento owes me an old debt;
“He hates my house; and my own name
“Has caused him many a pang of shame—
“Flung gloom upon his closing age”—
Here the knight laugh’d in scorn and rage.
His mirth had the metallic sound
Of iron hoof on frozen ground.
And well did fit his dark eyes’ glitter
That laugh, so savage and so bitter!
The prison clock had slowly boom’d
Twelve, ere the knight again resum’d;
“But little does he know me, and
“Although no sword is in my hand,
“He yet shall find that at a foe
“A brain like mine can strike a blow.”
And here he paused: that busy brain
Roved backward o’er the past again.
And now he frown’d, and now he smil’d,
As many memories defil’d

Before him in his musing mood
In that deep, prison-solitude.
And well his subtile knowledge, then
Of all the varied thoughts of men
Did serve his purpose, for his skill
Was working out old Stento's ill.

And could his many thoughts be trac'd,
As now he sat, and now he pac'd,
They'd make a volume strange, I ween,
As any which you e'er have seen!

The clock had often slowly toll'd
Out to the city how time fled;
And morning broke in red and gold
Before he sought his rugged bed
Where sleeping calmly as a child
Full often in his dreams he smil'd.
Anon the jailor shambled down
The dimly lighted corridor,
And with a deep and thoughtful frown
Paus'd at the noble's door.
He was a stout and rugged knave—
Strong as an Andalusian bull—

His forehead fitting well a slave—
His cunning eyes of murder full.
He wore a jerkin darkly stain'd
Bound by a girdle that sustain'd
A ponderous bunch of rusted keys—
Each one, how full of histories!
The jailor paus'd in reverie,
His bearded chin upon his breast—
His thick lips smil'd in savage glee
As at some ghastly jest;
And as in that dim corridor
He halted at the noble's door,
He seem'd a very demon—such
As modern Dunstan scarce would touch.
The jailor found the knight asleep—
His slumber was profound and deep,
For oft to rouse the Lord he tried
Before he turn'd upon his side;
How sharply then the man he eyed!
Who now with solemn nod and wink
Produc'd the parchment and the ink.
And now the knight with clerkly hand
Fill'd up the sheet, which well he scann'd,
Then gave it to the jailor, and

Bade him with secrecy and care
That night within the palace square
Place it beneath a statue's base,—
Which he describ'd: then leave the place,
Nor pause to see who took it thence —
His life would answer such offence.
The rugged knave with many a vow
Of secrecy withdrew, and now
The knight leant back and strangely laugh'd:
Quoth he, "I've shot a cloth-yard shaft.
"Suspicion wears no corslet—so
"Old Stento long shall feel this blow
"E'en when the hand which drew the bow
"Is mouldering 'neath the chancel low.
"And guarding 'gainst his menac'd doom
"Shall swifter hurry to the tomb."

III.

THE SQUARE.

'Tis scarcely dawn, yet up each street
The citizens all press amain,
Making with the incessant beat
And patter of their heavy feet
A sound like driving rain.
Why rise the people with the sun?
The Carnival has long been done.—
Why throng these artisans and churls,
These men and matrons, youths and girls?
Why to the ducal palace, proud,
Should press to-day this mighty crowd?
It is to see a gallant show,
Verona's duke his court will hold;
And can it be, that thus they go,

So early, only to behold
An old man 'dight in crown of gold—
And courtiers with their nodding plumes,
And knights and soldiers, squires and grooms?

They go to stand without the while
Their ducal sovereign takes his throne;
For all within, each marble aisle,
The noble claimeth as his own.
And well the people love display
Of martial pomp, or civic pow'r,
And on such grand, eventful day,
They mutter if the sky but low'r,
And swear outright at mist or show'r.
Onward they struggle to the square,
Happy indeed if foremost there—
There, on embattled walls they hung
And to the sculptur'd columns clung.
And swore, and push'd, and strove amain,
Each one a better place to gain.
What then had brought this noisy rout—
Simply to gaze, and gazing shout?
No! 'twas a banquet rare and sweet
To which they pressed with eager feet.

They long'd to gaze upon the face,
Of one, renown'd for deeds afar—
Who in his beauty, and his grace,
Might shame the very "morning star."
Young in his years; old in renown
Of deeds in field; or 'leaguer'd town—
But more than deeds in any clime,
He bore the potent spell of crime;
For which he was to be arraign'd—
To feast each speculative eye.
To see a noble felon chain'd,
Anon, perchance to see him die—
Such spectacle as *this* they sought—
For this they struggled and they fought—
All else to them, that day was nought:
And as the people gather'd fast
Full many a pluméd noble pass'd.

Alas! that e'er it should be so—
That princely born—that high and low
Are ever eager for such show.
And darkest guilt and deepest crime
Will win attention, when, alas!
Heroic deeds, grand and sublime

Writ in the chronicle of time,
As worthy manhood's noblest prime
Unseen, unnotic'd pass.

There is a darksome spell in guilt,
We listen, tho' we may grow pale,
And scan the blade, and mark the hilt
Where still the blood upon it spilt
Tells murder's ghastly tale.

Now, on this very day, 'twas said
A peer would answer with his head,
For a mysterious deed, so dark,
That when men whisper'd of his crime
They said: it was by far more stark
Than any done within their time.
Its very mystery but lent
New charms unto the frightful tale,
For vainly was conjecture spent
And keenest wit of no avail.
"By Bacchus!"—thus a goldsmith swore,
His age was near upon three score,—
"He ne'er had known the like before."
And whether guilty of the deed,
Or innocent, he knew full well,

The noble was a noxious weed —
A very imp escap'd from hell:
For, did he not in that same town
Three years ago ride Marco down?
And drive his lance thro' Cola quite,
Because he spatter'd the gay knight?
With this his mind was well imbued,
That he would hardly 'scape this crime;
For, there had been a deadly feud
Between the Duke and Knight sometime.
The tumult broke his story's thread,
Or more the goldsmith sure had said.
For now the wild, excited rout
Sent upward a protracted shout;
Flung up their caps towards the sky
And shouted, never thinking why.
Oh, man! when in thy brutal glee
Thou fling'st thy bonnet in the air,
Dost never think, the joy to thee
Is but anothers dark despair?
And when the scaffold, stern and grim,
Attracts thy ever-curious eye,
Shout not, but waft a pray'r for him
Whose doom it is thereon to die.

4*

Think! tho' the evening clouds are roll'd
In mingled hues of red and gold,
Until their rich and splendid flow
Has Aidenn river's radiant glow—
Think! they cast shadows *just* below.
Tho' bright to us, yet *other* eyes
May see all darkness in the skies:
So, the brave spectacles of earth,
Alas! too often owe their birth
To light which falls on show'ry tears
Wrung by some others bitter fears:
Tho' bright to us they are array'd,
Below, perchance, they cast a shade

And now the air is rent with cries,
The men-at-arms and guards in sight,
Attract the ~~many~~ eager eyes
And fill the people with delight;
Not that they care now for such show
As soldiers stepping grave and slow,
Beneath their waving pennon's flow.
They scarcely note the plumes that dance—
The brilliant gleam of casque or lance
To-day wins no applause—no glance.

For one alone the people look,
The criminal, if such he be,
And now by mass and holy book,
He is a gallant fit to see!

One, seeming scholar by his words,
And by his dark and sombre dress,
Said: as the knight came full in sight
That like the falcon among birds

The noble was 'mid men.

And the stout burgher shouts and smiles
Because, within the serried files
He sees the proud patrician form
On which to-day must burst the storm.
And e'en yon giddy, tip-toe boy
Exulting, shouts for savage joy,
Nor recks he that the gallant show
Is bought by blood, and guilt and woe.
And Portia—yonder dark-haired maid,
Forgets to ply her floral trade;
And mark ye, sirs! the dainty girl
Avails herself of that strong churl,
Lest she by sudden slip, or fall,
Should lose her footing on the wall—

Nor cares that his grim hand is plac'd
With freedom on her slender waist,
The day before his cheek had paid
For such acquaintance with the maid.

On one alone the people look —
The criminal if such he be,—
And sooth! by mass and holy book,
He is a gallant, fit to see!
They shouted, and they star'd, but soon
Began to change the human tide,
Like that which underneath the moon
Obeys her on the ocean wide.
Had he been poor, and old, and bow'd,
Hisses had met him from the crowd;
But rich, and beautiful, and proud,
No curse was breath'd—at least aloud;
And the fair flow'r girl's lips avow'd
In accents clear, and sharp and loud,
That such a proper knight, indeed,
Should never on the scaffold bleed:
That is, if pray'r to Mary Mother,
Could in his place thrust—any other.

The noble gaz'd on man and girl—
On ruffian—artizan—or churl,
Who drew away and backward shrank,
As when the spur is red and dank
With blood drawn from the charger's flank,
The steed will swerve, and back recoil,
So swerv'd each swarthy son of toil:
Before that glance—that "evil eye"—
They cross themselves and fain would fly;
And as he thus the people eyed,
Perchance he thought what sport 'twould be
With lance in rest thro' them to ride
In blood up to his charger's knee—
To hew them down with gleaming steel—
To see them stagger back and reel,
And fall beneath his horses heel;
For, fierce is he tho' fair he seems
As hero of romantic dreams:
And he, arm'd ranks can well divide,
And such as these could dash aside—
Could from his pathway, dash and fling
Like yielding reeds from heron's wing.
Whate'er his thoughts, his haughty glance
Hush'd deep in silence that vast crowd;

And many a man, as if in trance
With mingl'd fear and rev'rence bow'd
And almost breath'd a pray'r aloud.
And strange it was, that each man there
In after years was heard to swear,
When that bright glance was cold and dim
That the proud knight, so fair and slim,
Had with a meaning dark and grim
That morning look'd alone on *him*.

The noble's face told not of care;
As proud and high and debonair,
With calm, and cold, collected air,
He mounted up the marble stair—
The stair ~~that~~ led to certain doom—
A felon's death—a felon's tomb.
And yet, beneath his bonnet's plume
His forehead show'd no sign of gloom;
But had his regal brow been crown'd,
And royal purple's sumptuous fold,
His stately shoulders clung around
He scarce had look'd more proudly cold.
And thus he gain'd the topmost stair,
Then for a moment slowly turn'd

And gaz'd around him with the air
Of one who had but late returned—
Who look'd upon familiar view
That still was what of old he knew.
Then slowly pass'd within the door,
But even then no loud uproar
Rose from the lip of churl, or boor.
There rose no shout, no curse, no cry,
The charm of that large liquid eye
Still held them with its subtile spell—
Restraining; why, they could not tell.

IV.

THE TRIAL.

WITHIN the white plumes wave and flow
Until the gazer might presume,
That there had been a fall of snow
That morning on each dancing plume.
And through the hall the velvet seats
Are rang'd in many circles round,
And in the aisles that stretch like streets
Scarce any place can now be found.
Up in the galleries, below,
The waving feathers float and flow;
And many a radiant lady there
Is seated in her carved chair.
The air within hath caught the scent
Of perfume from the floating dresses,
Or, from luxuriant, drifting tresses!
A thousand odors blent!

While he on whom all eyes are bent
With the same look of proud repose
Right onward to his place he goes.
Sombre and sad his velvet suit
In color like the fig's ripe fruit—
And well his countenance doth fit
With the dark, solemn hue of it;
A woman's face was his in cast,
And few had dreamt from its soft mould
That he scarce twenty summers past,
Could in iniquity be old;
And passionless, and calm, and cold
You well had deem'd him, but his eye
Gave to assumption such the lie.
And could that hand, fair as a girl's,
That quietly put back his curls—
Could that white hand bedeck'd with rings,
Be that of one whose prowess won
Applause from potentates and kings,
For knightly deeds which he had done?
And as his glance rov'd o'er the scene,
Each thought of what he might have been;
For in his eyes of liquid light
There gleam'd that stern, unwavering might—

That will which cannot quail, nor bend
That liveth proudly to the end.—
The will, which seen in holy eyes
Before some dark Agrippa's bar,
The Mother Church doth canonize,
And trumpet to the world afar;
But he such tribute ne'er can win—
His glance is but a glance of sin,
Altho' as tranquilly it gleams
As star-light on a fountain's streams.
As he looked round no whisper'd word
Was spoken, not a white plume stirr'd;
For every lord and lady there
Felt something of that mystic fear—
That strange, that chill, abnormal dread
We feel when watching with the dead.
When underneath the ghastly sheet
We see the outlines of the clay,
The crosséd arms, the rigid feet,
That lay not as the living lay.
For well they knew that certain doom
Awaited him they gaz'd upon,
And that a felon's nameless tomb
Would close on him by set of sun:

For, added to the fierce duke's hate
A rumor had been nois'd abroad,
That treason 'gainst his native state
Hung also o'er the gallant lord.
The duke his enemy, two crimes
Of legal brand now held the hilt,
And sure were they, that vesper chimes
Would see him expiate his guilt.
The duke his enemy, and why?
The duke had once a fair young bride—
Had rarely wander'd from her side—
Had seen no light save in her eyes—
Had trembled at her lightest sighs—
But once, in down-cast eyes and blush
He read a meaning deep and black—
He follow'd in the lady's track—
He follow'd close—he follow'd fast—
He saw what made him start aghast.
Next morn the noble lord had fled,
And Stento's lovely wife was dead.
With such a judge, his horoscope
Was gilded by no starry hope.

Leoni Di Monota say
Thy prayers, if ever thou hast pray'd,
For truly 'tis thy latest day —
To-morrow, and thou shalt be laid
Within the silent valley's shade.
Leoni cross thyself and vow,—
Thine enemy is coming now,
The ducal crown upon his brow.
Oh! cross thyself, and say some pray'r,
Thy foe is coming—he is here!
Upon his throne he takes his seat,
To him the hour is passing sweet;
And now his eyes glare out and blaze
Upon thee with exulting gaze —
Nor does he for a moment try
To guard the menace of his eye.
No marvel 'twas that Stento felt
Exultant on that evil day—
Resolve which never could relent
Until he saw his fated prey
Beside the headsman's dark block lay
A headless trunk of gory clay:
No marvel that he look'd elate
And scowl'd a look of bitter hate.

And Leoni paid back his glance
With such a steady, haughty stare,
That the old man first look'd askance,
Then fairly trembled on his chair.
A pause. The duke then spoke aloud:
"Leoni Di Monota, thou
"To-day appear'st before this crowd
"Of all the nobles of the land,
"To answer for the hellish deed
"Done by thy red right hand.
"And other charge, of treason too—
"Of plot against thy native state,
"Hath been unfolded to our view,
"To win for thee a deeper hate
"From all who know thy many crimes;
"Wrought here at home—in foreign climes—
"Which give thee infamy and shame,
"And sully thy patrician name.—
"Count Beppo, now rehearse thy tale,
"Which sooth! is one to fill with fright—
"To make the very stoutest quail,
"And list'ning, shudder and grow pale."
The while he spoke, Leoni's eyes
Rov'd careless o'er the gallant scene,

Calm as the stars in summer skies—
So bright, so tranquil, so serene,
That thou hadst never deem'd the knight
Was there arraign'd for such dark guilt,—
That one so fair, and young, and slight,
Had ever crimson life-blood spilt;—
Surely the tale cannot be true,
That he such murder stark could do!

Count Beppo is of high degree,
As by his bearing you may see.
Taller a head than other men,
In age, perhaps a score and ten.
Before the ducal throne he stands,
His pluméd bonnet in his hands.—
The multitude are hush'd to hear,
While in a tone distinct and clear,
Unmoved by all their eager eyes,
He told his story in this wise:
“Lord duke, it is a frightful task—
“A fearful tale of me you ask.
“’Twas on the night of dance and masque,
“At Prince Monota’s sumptuous hall,
“The last I think of Carnival—

“I there was bidden as a guest
“But linger’d longer than the rest,
“So that ’twas late when I betook
“My way, attended by two men—
“The time, beyond the stroke of ten.
“My path lay by Valdarno’s wall—
“The night was moonless, and no ray
“If I remember ’right did fall
“Upon my dark and lonesome way,
“Save that which my red torches’ wave
“Cast on the sad and silent street;
“Their light alone, some guidance gave
“Amid the darkness to my feet.
“In vacant mood upon the wall
“I watch’d my shadow rise and fall,
“When in the light, a postern low
“Seem’d open, in the torches glow.
“I paus’d; when suddenly a man,
“All bloody, pale, and looking wan,
“Stood with a look of hate and fright,
“For one brief moment in my sight,
“Then vanish’d in the gloomy night.
“Methought I heard another’s feet
“Join’d to his own in quick retreat;

“I follow’d fast, but stumbling fell,
“And then I heard my varlets cry,
“Who deem’d it was some wizard spell,
“Or spectral form escap’d from hell.
“Thinking they had some capture made
“Or stood perchance in need of aid,
“Their craven summons I obey’d.
“They deem’d him goblin—such reply
“Explain’d the meaning of their cry;
“Back at the door I paus’d to gaze,
“And there, revealed the torches’ blaze
“Upon the pavement white, a stain
“Small, round, and like a drop of rain;
“And on the handle of the door,
“Were finger-marks impress’d in gore.
“I smote the postern open wide—
“I held a torch above my head,
“And on the pavement soon espied,
“A darkly red, ensanguin’d tide,
“Dying the pallid marble wide.
“And then, a floral bow’r beside,
“The scene from which you felon fled—
“A maiden lying newly dead.

“Lord duke, I’ve look’d upon the slain
“Where Turkish arrows pour’d like rain—
“Where men fell like the ripen’d grain;—
“Have thro’ the horrid carnage rode,
“Where crimson blood in rivers flow’d;—
“Have seen friends fall in many a clime,
“Like grapes in our own vintage time;
“But never felt, in heart, or brain,
“Such sudden sickness and such pain,
“Pray God! I never may again!
“As was in that dark moment felt,
“While o’er the murder’d maid I knelt.
“So dark a deed, so sad a scene,
“Methinks before has never been.
“My lord, it was a sight of fear,
“To see her lips still wear a smile,
“And all her wealth of unbound hair
“Make in her blood a golden isle.
“While her soft eyes seem’d full of light—
“Her scarlet lips half smil’d apart,
“That look surviv’d the bloody knife
“Which had been driven to her heart.
“And strange, my lord, it seem’d to me,
“Upon those lips to tempt a bee,

“Still linger’d smile of childish glee;
“As if, when seal’d forever here
“Upon them hung the name most dear;
“Lovely in death, her sudden doom,
“Had left behind her girlish bloom;
“As rose, tho’ pluck’d will long retain
“Its perfum’d breath and crimson stain:
“Still fair: for the dark Terror-King
“Had left no shadow of his wing;
“Nor had his stern hand swept away
“The beauty from her soulless clay.
“While thus I look’d in dumb amaze,
“I heard a hasty footfall near;
“When raising my bewilder’d gaze,
“I saw a man with streaming hair,
“And bitter look of wild despair.
“Aghast, he star’d upon the maid
“While o’er his face went deadly shade;
“A moment, vainly he essay’d
“To loose his doublet’s golden clasp;
“And e’er my hand could give him aid,
“With a low groan, and sobbing gasp,
“He reel’d and fell down in a fit;—
“He fell, like mountaineer when hit

“By thunder-bolt of summer storm,
“When the red lightning gleams and shines
“In tempest on the Appenines.
“And when my grooms together rais’d
“His pallid face, thereon I read
“That he whom now I deem’d as dead,
“Was Lord Valdarno; whence he came,
“Or why, in sooth, I cannot tell!
“All that I know is, that he fell.
“What follow’d, you, my lord, well know,
“I, to rehearse my tale of woe,
“With hurrying feet, then sought you out.
“I found you at Monota’s rout—
“I told you that the man I’d seen,
“Was yonder knight in silken sheen,
“Fleeing, all pale and splash’d with gore,
“Thro’ that low postern’s bloody door.
“The rest to you, to all, is known.”
He made low rev’rence to the throne—
A moment more his form was lost
Amid the sea of plumes that toss’d.
The while he spoke Leoni’s look
Was one which Beppo ill could brook;

For tho' he listen'd all the while,
It was with that sardonic smile —
With that cold irony of eye
With which we listen to some lie —
But listen, scorning to reply.
Not so with others in that hall,
They heard the tale which might appal,
Nor shame their manhood, for the dread
Of such a deed of sin and crime;
The darkest, as Count Mora said,
Which ever had disgrac'd their clime —
That is, he meant, for a long time.
Much then they marvel'd, whisper'd, gaz'd,
Said: they were "horrified, amaz'd"
That he could look so calm and cold —
So very self-possess'd, and bold,
While list'ning to the frightful tale,
Which made them shudder and grow pale.
The ladies sigh, and vow again
Their sex are "angels all; but men
"Are very devils — quite sublime
"In their dark aptitude for crime."
And one, with eyes of cooing dove
When swinging on an April bough,

Now wonders if it was for "love—
"Or, vengeance on some broken vow;"
And as her pouting red lips smil'd,
She added that, "since but a child,
"Her dreams had been of love as wild."—
Then, glancing at young Mora, said—
That "sentiment had nearly fled—
"That poetry, which dealt in crimes
"Was fading from their wretched times."
She sigh'd, and down her dark eyes cast,
As Stento's voice rang out again—
Like sound of trumpet's gleeful blast
When breathing some triumphal strain.
His tones were heard e'en in the yard,
"Stand forth the captain of our guard."
Then silence fell upon the hall,
You might have heard a snow-flake fall,
As forth the captain strode and told
In accents measur'd, calm, and cold,
While playing with the hilt of gold
Beneath his crimson mantle's fold
Told how on that memorial night,
Mark'd by its tragedy so grim,

A messenger all pale with fright,
And out of breath had summoned him,
To hurry with a chosen band,
To Prince Monota's palace nigh;
Where he had with his own right hand
Found bloody garments not yet dry,
And dagger on whose blade and hilt
Was crimson evidence of guilt.
The chamber where these things were found,
Was Leoni's, so he had heard;
But to this fact he was not bound,
He said what others had aver'd.
The sister of the noble knight,
In sooth, he thought had died outright; —
For Lord Valdarno's wife fell low,
As falls the timid mountain doe
Brought down by shaft from hunter's bow;
Or, like some glorious banner smote
From battled parapet to moat;
And the fair lady's eyes to him
Seem'd in that fall of her's so dim,
That much he was amaz'd to learn
That life to her could e'er return;

Then, bidden by the duke, he had
Arrested him, the prisoner there;
And this he'd say, however bad,
He surely show'd no sign of fear;
But on the dagger look'd with eyes
That only spoke intense surprise.
One thing remain'd, the knight had writ
A subtile scroll, and given it
Unto the jailor, who had brought
It straight to him, for it was fraught
With deadly treason 'gainst the state,
This to the duke himself had sent—
And such was all he could relate.—
T'wards Stento then the soldier bent—
Took of the knight a steady view,
And slowly disappear'd.

V.

THE APPARITION.

THE evening shadows fall apace.
Leoni, mark yon setting sun,
That radiance falling on thy face,
When it fades out thy race is run!
Next came the leech; in terms of art
He prated of the veins and heart,
And spoke in melancholy tones,
Of tissues, art'ries, nerves and bones.
Why stops he now with sudden start,
In disquisition on his art?
He casts a look of fear and fright
Where standing by the felon-knight,
A shadow like to him bedight,
Is standing in the yellow light.
By mass and book, a wondrous sight!

For as they rose upon the view,
None there could tell between the two.
The brow, the lip, the hair, the eye,
Of self-same hue, of self-same dye,
Clad even in the self-same suit—
In color like the fig's ripe fruit.
The duke, the leech, the nobles gas'd
On shape so mystically rais'd;
And all now heard a muffled sound
Go creeping, creeping, creeping 'round.
At that strange noise each shrinks and starts—
It was the muffled throb of hearts!
And as it creeps, and swells, and rings
The very skin doth seem to crawl,
With march of loathsome charnel things.
Started the locks upon each brow,
Like hair on angry mastiff's back—
Each sign'd the cross, and made some vow—
Pray'd Saints' defence against attack
Of demon, as they deem'd him now.
And even to this day the tale
Is told, and telling men grow pale,
And after legend of this knight—
'Tis true I vow, God save the mark!

That bearded men thro' sheer affright,
Fear e'en the shortest walk by dark.
And further, does tradition say,
That standing in the sunlight's gold,
Those two alone stood calm and cold;
Save that Mónota's large, dark eyes,
Flash'd for a moment with surprise,
The next they shone as calm and chill,
As moonlight on a frozen rill,
That glitters in the midnight cold;—
And further still, to me was told,
That now his shadow did not lay
Where it had lain upon the wide,
White marble pavement, in a tide
Of golden sunlight still and calm;
And where his shadow lately swam,
Was vacancy, and not a trace
Was left unless in that wild face—
Unless the form of that strange knight,
So pale, so stern, so ghastly white,
That stood Monota now beside,
Had started from the golden tide.

Trembles the duke, and shivers now,
While fainting ladies breathe a vow
And sign the crucifix on brow.
As certain sounds make harp-strings quiver,
So the clear tones that then uprose,
In floating 'round made heart-chords shiver,
And froze the flow of that red river
Whose tide to passion ebbs and flows.
Think, gentle sirs, that it must be,
This tide that flows with every breath
Must rush on to the silent sea,
The solemn sea of death!
The wondrous voice that now uprose,
Around them floats, around them flows;
So cold, so sweet, so wondrous clear—
So full of passionate despair,—
That even now the sternest eye
Grows wet, and yet they know not why.
It swells along, like echo woke
Within some cloister'd chamber's range,
As if some apparition spoke.—
It was so very, wondrous strange,
So low, yet so distinct and strong—

Above, below, it sweeps along,
Like Ariel's wild, bewild'ring song;
It floats, it flows, as when the wing
Of bee, or any other thing,
Makes hum which you distinctly hear
Around, above you, every where.
They look above—they look around—
As if to *see* the mystic sound,
Ah! yonder is the whisper found!
Comes it from Leoni, or him
Who stands beside him in the sun?
Where in the twilight growing dim,
You well had deem'd them but as one,
And felt the solemn thrill of awe
Which fell on those who heard and saw.
Simple and few, but startling, fell,
Such words as these which now I tell.
"Behold in me Valdarno's wife,
"Mark ye this hand! it drove the knife!
"That night I gather'd up each tress—
"I donn'd as now, my brother's dress;
"But why I did this deed you ask,
"God! 'tis indeed a bitter task!

“Because she wrong’d Valdarno’s wife;
“Yes listen, sirs, I took her life,
“And I, all pale and splash’d with gore,
“Count Beppo saw flee thro’ the door.
“Then spare Leoni; I, alone,
“Should for the deed I did atone.”

As Beatrice thus spoke, a doubt
Crept in the minds of those about,
And dark Count Beppo’s face grew pale
While list’ning to the lady’s tale.

Valiant the duke—valiant and brave—
With women, or a crouching slave;
And now discov’ring that the sight
Was neither charm nor hellish sleight—
That what he deem’d a phantom knight
Was all deception, he grew wroth—
His brow and cheek turn’d ruddy dusk,
And gather’d on his lip the froth
Like that around the wild boar’s tusk,
When on a winter-hunting day
The grizzled monarch turns at bay.
Savage the tone his deep voice took,
And fiercer now his dark eyes look,

As out he thunder'd: "Take her hence—

"The captain of our guard—De Vence!

"Seize—drag her forth—her cunning lie

"Shall never save, for he must die!

"Aye! by my father's soul and name—

"I swear it by his latest breath,

"That for this deed of sin and shame,

"Monota dies the death!"

The captain, at the duke's command,

Started, and stretch'd his swarthy hand;

Then down he went like riven oak,

When smitten by the thunder-stroke.

No man of mortal mould might stand

'Neath buffet from Monota's hand,

Which made the dark blood spout and flow,

And those who saw the heavy blow,

Said: that it fell with such a shock,

As might have splinter'd granite rock.

Then rav'd the duke; commotion rose;

The throng sway'd backward, to and fro,

Like avalanche of Alpine snow,

Before it seeks the vale below.

Amid the din, with 'wilder'd glance,

The lady stood like one in trance—

Then gather'd on her brow a flush,
Perchance, the fading sunset's blush—
Then out it faded from her face,

She gave a sudden start;
Like freezing tide in fragile vase

The blood had burst her heart.
Monota kneeling, rais'd her head—
Sweet were the names he murmur'd o'er,
But vain, alas! for she was dead,
Her lips could answer him no more.
And tho' the noble ne'er complain'd,
For his proud front was well maintain'd,

All pitied as he knelt.
Then Beppo, with affrighted look,
Uprais'd his voice, which strangely shook;
Its tones were tremulous and thick,
As those of aged man long sick,
Who gasps and gathers in his breath,
In the last agonies of death.

"Lord Duke, upon this form I've gaz'd,
"Profoundly, fearfully amaz'd;
"And now may I from holy creed,
"Like Turkish infidel recede—
"May shield, and lance, and sword, and steed—

"May God desert me at any need,
"If I can tell which did the deed."
One kiss, Monota slowly rose,
His face was full of stern repose—
There was no triumph for his foes.
For such as he proudly disdain
To show the evidence of pain;
And tho' the heart be wrung the while,
Will mask the anguish with a smile;
And tho' the agony be deep,
Such eyes as his may never weep.
And now amid a solemn hush,
Unbroken, save by sob, or gush
Of woman's tears, they bear her out—
Her liquid eyes are vacant now—
The flush gone from her regal brow—
Her lips no more on earth to vow—
Dead, blighted like a summer bough:
Nor all these tears, like April rain,
Shall give the rent bough life again.

VI.

THE DOOM.

WHEN ceas'd the echo of their tread,
Who bore the fair and pallid dead,
Silence profound fell over all
Within that vast tribunal hall.
They listen'd; for their thronéd duke
Spoke in a voice of stern rebuke;
And dignity he could assume,
As he would sword, or glove, or plume:
But 'twas alone sustain'd by art,
His was no grandeur of the heart,
Which most man's crown'd and sceptred kings
Should show in hate of evil things—
Should hate; but hating, only then,
The deeds, and not their doers, men.
But such was not his; no, oh no!
He simply triumph'd o'er a foe.

His heavy eye-brows darkly met
Above his eyes so deeply set,
Where the wild eloquence of hate
Told that his bosom was elate.—
His tones were stern—they seem'd to freeze,
His words perchance were such as these:
“Nobles and gentle sirs: to-day,
“A sight has risen on our view,
“Which told in strolling minstrel's lay,
“We never would accredit true;
“And wondrous cunning story told
“By that poor lady now so cold;
“But her's the fate of one of old,
“Who unto the Apostle lied,
“And then, as she, fell down and died.
“When ministers of God about,
“And surely such were here to-day,
“Speak in such language who may doubt
“God's deeds disprove what mortals say.
“And tho' her words were all untrue,
“Yet do we honor such deep love,
“And pray that in the courts above
“Her spirit hath found peace.

“We say her story was not true —
“’Tis known to most—to all of you,
“That on that sad, memorial night,
“Mark’d by its scene of fear and fright,
“The radiant lady all the while
“Lit the gay revel with her smile.”
He paus’d, as if to win assent,
While ’round confirming whisper went;
For many a one had seen her glance,
The loveliest in the festive dance.
“But e’en, which all the saints forbid!
“We grant the stricken lady did
“This deed of more than hellish guilt—
“Yet, granting that this blood was spilt
“By her fair hand and her’s alone,—
“Still, sirs, Monota must atone
“For plot against his native state,
“Which well deserves our honest hate.”
Then quoth he to the prisoner: “Thou
“At set of yonder sun must bow —
“The last of all thy princely stock,—
“Beside the headman’s sable block.
“Confess thyself: for death prepare—
“The set of yonder sun is near;

“And now our ancient law allows,
“That you may speak, if so you list,
“But better spend the time in vows,
“For gathers fast the evening’s mist.”
Had Stento’s words been words of love
Breath’d by such lips as Moslem deem,
Are waiting for their souls above
In that earth-heav’n of which they dream,
Monota’s heart had bounded high —
His cheek had won a deeper dye,
And softer shone his haughty eye;
But now, whate’er his thoughts, no trace
Was written on his pallid face.
No color came, no color fled,
His brow grew neither pale, nor red;
The same stern, dark, impassive air —
The same indomitable stare —
The cold, and broad sardonic sneer,
With which he heard Count Beppo’s tale,
Now wreath’d his lip and lit his eye —
That eye which did not shrink nor quail,
When thus by Stento doom’d to die.
His glance with his dark foeman’s met,
And those who saw could ne’er forget

The outrance of that steady eye,
Which spoke, before he made reply;
His speech abrupt and strange begun —
Old Stento trembled ere 'twas done : —
It haunted him by night and day
Like hov'ring vulture o'er its prey;
It rang in after years like howls
To him whose glazing eye grows dim,
Upon the battle-field where prowls
The gaunt grey wolf who waits for him;
Subtile the poison that he drank
In Leoni's clear tones that day;
Which from his lips how e'er he shrank
Would never, never pass away.
In days of old, Egyptian spell
Made Memnon's statue sunrise tell.
Strange sounds those of the statue-king,
And strange the spell, in sooth, we call!
But Leoni's a stranger 'thing,
For it gave voices unto *all*.
And solemn music to appal —
Which shaded Stento's brow with gloom
When Leoni slept in the tomb.

Its music was a dirge—its swell
At morn, at noon, at midnight fell—
The tolling of a funeral bell.
To him on whom its wizard spell
Clung, till it made the earth as hell.
Clung, till it wrought its fated doom—
A bloody shroud—a bloody tomb.
Leoni's words—Leoni's look,
Had all the meaning of that book
Which England's Lord Protector shook;
For from that day 'twas known to all,
A simple shadow on the wall
Had meaning Stento to appal—
A kindly look, and he was sure
The gazer evil purpose bore—
His look assum'd but to allure—
Till all the waves on slumber's shore
Were froth'd and red with crimson gore.

He rose—the gladiator-knight—
Confronting death with brow as free
From any sign of fear or fright,
As if his words were but “good night,”
After some sumptuous revelry.

His speech abrupt, 'twas thus begun:
Old Stento trembled ere 'twas done,
"Once, I remember, 'twas in May,
"An idle boy, in idle play,
"Unconsciously of what I did
"I crush'd a rose—a foolish thing,
"For fierce wild bee within was hid,
"And long I felt his dying sting:
"So Stento, you to-day may crush
"My youth in its first blush and bloom,
"But thou canst never, never hush
"The tones which from my bloody tomb,
"Will pay thee back my early doom.
"As for the murder, it must be,
"To thee, and all, a mystery—
"Of that I speak not. Lend thine ear
"And tremble on thy ducal chair.
"And, mark me! what I tell to thee,
"Oh! Stento, is not told to save,
"But simply, duke, that thou mayst see
"Before thee, ever, thy red grave.
"I tell thee, as I would awake
"A slumb'ring foe, that he might quake

“To see my coldly gleaming steel,
“And thus be doubly made to feel.
“Now listen: that small billet told
“Thee of conspiracy, as bold
“As ever in the days of yore
“Stretch’d kingly Cæsar in his gore—
“A week—another day—thy throne—
“’Tis known to thee, had been my own.
“But on that scroll you saw not, no;
“The names, a long and lordly row!
“With me sworn to strike home the blow
“That was to lay thee, tyrant, low.
“Thou saw’st them not—they were not *there*,
“But many a prince, and many a peer,
“Had couch’d for me his knightly spear,
“And on the night of my arrest
“Full many a blade had pierc’d thy breast,
“But that surprise left friends no time
“To pay thee for thy life of crime.
“Aye! I had such, sworn to abide,
“In sudden rising, by my side,
“Else why should I return where death
“For me was lurking in thy breath?

“Why should I leave the court of France
“Where mine was held the stoutest lance?
“Why should I come and brave thy frown,
“But to secure thy ducal crown!
“Such was my stake—I play’d and lost—
“*My* purpose has been strangely cross’d;
“But tho’ I die, I say, dream not
“*Their* purpose can be e’er forgot,
“Or, check’d their deep and subtile plot.
“Bethink thee, Stento, in thy time,
“Thou’st done, old man, full many a crime!
“Recall and think upon each debt
“That others will repay thee yet.
“See in the wine thy sudden doom
“See in thy bed a bloody tomb;
“See in each hand the thirsty steel
“Which thy accursed form shall feel.
“Thine eyes shall see where e’er they turn—
“An epitaph—a funeral urn—
“And thou shalt look, and looking groan,
“To see thy blood upon the stone.
“I die; but sudden, bitter blight,
“Shall fall upon thee in the night.

“The gift I leave in going hence,
“Is that, oh! Stento of—suspense.
“And when death comes, think of my fate—
“My prophecy—my deathless hate.
“I die: and ’twill be told in songs,
“How Stento righted private wrongs.
“For ’tis no treason ’gainst the state
“That wins for me thy blood-hound hate.
“Ah ha! my lord! truth ’s a keen shaft,”
And here the reckless noble laugh’d.
“And now behold this signet ring
“With this the headsman I defy;
“For here my spirit finds a wing—
“’Tis thus—and only thus I die.”
The ring unto his lips he rais’d—
He press’d a spring, and as men gas’d,
 Leoni Di Monota fell
Dead on the marble floor.

THE CHARGE AT BALAKLAVA.

DASHING onward, Captain Nolan
Spurring furiously is seen—
And altho' the road meanders,
His ~~no~~ heavy steed of Flanders,
But one fit for the commanders
Of her majesty the Queen.

Halting where the noble squadrons
Stood impatient of delay,
Out he drew his brief dispatches
Which their leader quickly snatches,
At a glance their meaning catches—
They are order'd to the fray!

All that morning they had waited,
—As their frowning faces show'd,—
Horses stamping; riders fretting,
And their teeth together setting—
Not a single sword-blade wetting
As the battle ebb'd and flow'd.

Now the fever'd spell is broken,
Ev'ry man feels twice as large—
Ev'ry heart is fiercely leaping,
As a lion rous'd from sleeping,
For they know they shall be sweeping
In a moment to the charge.

Brightly gleam six hundred sabres,
And the brazen trumpets ring;
Steeds are gather'd—spurs are driven—
And the heavens wildly riven
With a mad shout upward given,
Scaring vultures on the wing.

Stern its meaning: was not Gallia
Looking down on Albion's sons?
In each mind this thought implanted —
Undismay'd, and all undaunted —
By the battle-fiends enchanted,
They ride down upon the guns.

Onward! on! the chargers trample,
Quicker falls each iron heel,
And the headlong pace grows faster;
Noble steed, and noble master,
Rushing on to red disaster,
Where the heavy cannons peal.

In the van rides Captain Nolan,
Wide his flying tresses wave,
And his heavy broad-sword flashes
As upon the foe he dashes —
God! his face turns white as ashes,
He has ridden to his grave.

Down he fell, prone from his saddle
Without motion, without breath,
— Never more at trumpet to waken! —
He, the very first one taken
From the bough so sorely shaken,
In that vintage-time of Death!

In a moment, in a twinkling,
He was gather'd to his rest,
In the time for which he'd waited: —
With his gallant heart elated,
Down went Nolan — decorated —
With a death-wound on his breast.

Comrades still are onward charging,
He is lying on the sod;
Onward still their steeds are rushing
Where the shot and shell are crushing —
From his corpse the blood is gushing,
And his soul is with its God.

As they spur on, what strange visions

Flit across each rider's brain!

Thoughts of maidens fair — of mothers —

Friends and sisters — wives and brothers —

Blent with images of others,

Whom they ne'er shall see again.

Onward still the squadrons thunder,

— Knightly hearts were theirs and brave! —

Men and horses without number

All the furrow'd ground encumber,

Falling fast to their last slumber —

Bloody slumber! bloody grave!

Of that charge at Balaklava,

— In its chivalry sublime! —

Vivid, grand, historic pages

Shall descend to future ages —

Poets, painters, hoary sages,

Shall record it for all time.

Telling how those English horsemen
Rode the Russian gunners down.
How with ranks all torn and shatter'd—
How with helmets hack'd and batter'd—
How with sword-arms blood-bespatter'd—
They won honor and renown.

'Twas "not war;" but it was splendid
As a dream of old romance;
Thinking which their Gallie neighbors
Thrill'd to watch them at their labors,
Hewing red graves with their sabres
In that wonderful advance.

Down went many a gallant soldier—
Down went many a stout dragoon;
Lying grim, and stark, and gory,
On the crimson field of glory;
Leaving us a wondrous story,
And their white-cliff'd home a boon.

Full of hopes and aspirations

Were their hearts at dawn of day;
Now with forms all rent and broken,
Bearing each some frightful token
Of a scene ne'er to be spoken—
In their silent sleep they lay.

Here a noble charger stiffens,

There his rider grasps the hilt
Of his sabre, lying bloody
By his side, upon the muddy
Trampled ground, which darkly ruddy,
Shows the blood that he has spilt.

And to-night the moon shall shudder

As she looks down on the moor,
Where the dead of hostile races
Slumber, slaughter'd in their places;
All their rigid ghastly faces
Spatter'd hideously with gore.

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And the sleepers, ah! the sleepers,
Made a Westminster that day,
'Mid the seething battle's lava;
And each man who fell shall have a
Proud inscription — BALAKLAVA
Which shall never fade away!

THE DREAMER'S REMONSTRANCE.

TELL me not the dreams I cherish —
Tell me not I do entreat;
That they all must fade and perish,
Tho' so beautiful and sweet.

Tell me not, oh! tell me never,
That my dreams must all depart,
If they 're dreams, then let them ever
Shed their sunshine on my heart.

Tell me not my dreams are madness —
Tell me not that life is dark —
Crush not thus my young heart's gladness —
Quench not Hope's irradiant spark.

Tell me not my dreams are cheating—

Tell, oh! tell it not to me—

Unsubstantial, as the fleeting

Foam upon a summer sea.

Tell me not that I must banish,

Dreams in which I love to dwell;

Tell me not that they must vanish,

And my heart forget their spell.

Tell me not 'tis boyish folly

Cured by age, and age's sorrow;

I have seen the reddest holly

In the deepest winter glow.

Tell me not the idle story;

Nor expect me to believe,

That my dreams with all their glory

Come to mock me and deceive.

Then, oh Stoic! tell me never,

That my dreams must all depart;

If they 're dreams—then let them ever

Swallow-like build in my heart!

Let them thro' the summer flutter,
If in winter they must go;—
Let them gay and glad songs utter,
Now at least there is no snow.

A BRIEF HISTORY.

Ah me! I see her dreamy eyes,
Her dreamy eyes so soft and tender,
Flooded with light, like midnight skies
Lit by the solemn moon's sad splendor.

Such eyes perchance Madonna had,
Liquid, and luminous, and gleaming,
With light serene, and yet how sad,
As if they were forever dreaming!

And with their pensive lids bow'd down,
They seem the heavy tears repressing,
Or, with their lashes long and brown,
Uprais'd, they seem to God expressing

Some silent pray'r; — some pray'r so deep,
And with angelic thoughts so laden,
That very angels smile in sleep
And dream still sweeter dreams in Aidenn.

And tho' her eyes are kind and soft,
I gaze upon their placid glances,
As I would watch the stars aloft
When rapt in their eternal trances.

Serene and sad, they have a light
Of pure, and calm, and saint-like glory,
And yet the earnest gazer might
See therein hid, how sad a story!

Within her heart a statue stands —
A Pompey's statue, stern in beauty —
And slain beside it lies her love,
Stabb'd by that very Brutus — duty.

A kingly passion 'twas; but now
Over this Cæsar of her feelings,
No pleading Anthony, in tears
Is heard in passionate appealings.

And as I gaze, it is not strange
While on the past my vision bending
That I should see down its dark range
A superstition old descending:

You know in olden times 'twas held
By men who thus believing trembled,
That stabbing but an image would
Most surely slay whom it resembled.

And seeing as I see my love—
My love which was so unpropitious,
Thus stricken down, because, alas!
Like Cæsar, it was too "ambitious."

I feel strange terror, and I stand
Gazing upon my image lying
Within that Senate-chamber, and
Weep o'er it in its piteous dying.

I almost fancy that old spell
Revives anew; but the infiction
I know cannot be mine full well—
I know, with you, 'tis but a fiction.

And she, dear lady, suffers much;
She only waits for God to claim her,
And oh! her gentleness is such
That not in thought or word I blame her.

While in hope's twilight turning grey,
Meekly she strives against dejection,
Her mournful, dark eyes turn'd away
From any dream or retrospection.

Then wonder not that thus I write,
Nor that her eyes have me enchanted;
For once to meet their tender light
Is ever after to be haunted.

TO ZENOVA.

*"And oh! she dances such a way
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight."*—SIR JOHN SUELLINE.

I HAVE often stood, fair lady—
 Stood to watch thee in the dance,
Till I fancied it a vision—
 Or, an opiate's golden trance.

Every movement—every motion,
 As thy small feet beat the time,
Full of grace as wave of ocean,
 And of music as a rhyme

Which is woven by some poet
 In so gay and glad a strain,
That in reading, we bethink us
 Of the April drops of rain.

Like a shadow onward gliding
Now as gracefully you go;—
Or, a water flag when riding
On some star-lit river's flow.

And thy face is ever changing
With the changes of the tune,
As they say the waters vary
With the changes of the moon.

Now thine eyes are downward looking—
Now upraised in laughing light,
Ever fitful in their lustre
Like the tropic waves at night.

With thine arms crossed on thy bosom—
— Like a statue's how they gleam! —
Thou art beautiful, fair lady,
As a poet-sculptor's dream.

And I ponder, fair Zenova,
If thy slight form hath not grown
Into statue by Canova—
“Dancing girl” of pallid stone?

But when I could deem thee marble,
And the cheat might well believe,
Then I see thy snowy bosom's
Long, slow, undulating heave,

Like a lily which is bursting
In the silent midnight's hour—
When the moon is on the water
From its bud into the flower.

Gazing thus on thee enraptured
With a pleasure almost pain;
While I wish that—yes—forever
Thy fair form might thus remain,

Even then, away thou 'rt springing
Like a bird upon the wing,
Or a willow bough when swinging
To the early breath of Spring.

A COMMON EXPERIENCE.

SCARCE any words could tell
How I did love her;
How my young heart did swell—
Truly I lov'd her well,
Saw none above her!

Ah! she was passing fair
Radiant, yet tender;
With all her wealth of hair
Dream-like she did appear,
Full of strange splendor!

Under the summer skies—
Day and night haunted—
Fool'd by her looks and sighs,
Witch'd by her splendid eyes,
I was enchanted,

So: bow'd beneath her yoke,
In all love's madness,
Wild words to her I spoke—
Said: that like Raleigh's cloak,
Life and its gladness

I'd fling down, if she might
Deign but to use it;
And she, that summer night
Flooded with mellow light,
Did not refuse it.

No; but she leant her head,
With its rare tresses,
Full on my breast and said:
That she would wake though dead
At *my* caresses.

While the soft breezes fann'd
All the sweet roses—
She even kiss'd my hand,
Press'd to my bosom—and,
Go ask the roses.—

Days pass'd, ah! golden days,

Hope never trembled,
And I wove foolish lays
Winning her hollow praise—
How she dissembled!

Nights pass'd, ah! dreamy nights,

Nights that were trances—
Full of love's wild delights—
Skies that were starr'd with lights
Lit by her glances.

Then came the bitter times

Full of commotion,
When my poor, boyish rhymes
Mov'd her no more than chimes
Rung o'er the ocean.

When the plebeian came

Smirking and stealthy
In speech and person lame—
Vulgar in race and name—
But, he was wealthy!

And she, a living lie,
Grew each day colder,
Till at a revel, I,
When her new love was nigh
Touch'd her white shoulder.

And though her brow grew black—
With purpose certain
Out of the dancer's track,
I drew her—gave her back,
Under a curtain,

Gave her back letters—all
With brow unshaded—
Trinkets both great and small,
Then turning left the hall—
Never upbraided.

Days pass'd, ah! bitter days
Full of commotion;
Clouds without gilding rays—
Waves bearing no estraies
From hope's far ocean.

Then came a letter, black
Was the armorial
Seal, which upon its back
Told me of death's attack
On the memorial—

On the memorial race
Whence I descended;
Open'd: with flushing face
I found in life my place
Strangely amended.

Wealth! acres broad! all mine
And mine only!
Here was a fable fine—
Here was a draught of wine—
Now was I lonely?

No! I would up and don
Man's noble armor—
All life's great lessons con—
Upward I would, and on!
Leave this false charmer.

How she did try again
Back to entice me,
Need not be told—in vain
'Twas, for my faith was slain—
Once would suffice me.

Since then long years have pass'd,
That love has perish'd;
Now dreams before me, vast,
Rise upward thick and fast,
Dreams far more cherish'd.

And I to-night have trod,
While stars were sinking,
Out on the dewy sod
Where blossoms praise their God—
O'er past days thinking.

Thinking this night of June
'Mid these sweet roses,
While yonder still lagoon
Gleameth beneath the moon
Where she reposes.

So: twelve! my love will scold
At the night's lateness;
But that old tale is told—
Hence, all my path is gold
With love and greatness.

A SHORT SERMON.

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

THE night-wind comes in sudden squalls:
The ruddy fire-light starts and falls
Fantastically on the walls.

The bare trees all their branches wave;
The frantic wind doth howl and rave,
Like prairie-wolf above a grave.

And tho' the storm is on the wane,
Still thro' the lattice, on the pane
Spatters the heavy dismal rain.

The moon looks out; but cold and pale,
And seeming scar'd at this wild gale,
Draws o'er her pallid face a veil.

In vain I turn the poet's page—
In vain consult some ancient sage—
I hear alone the tempest rage.

The shutters tug at hinge and bar—
The windows clash with frosty jar—
The child creeps closer to "Papa."

And now, I almost start aghast,
The clamor rises thick and fast,
Surely a troop of fiends drove past!

That last shock shook the oaken door,
Sounding like billows on the shore,
On such a night, God shield the poor!

God shield the poor to-night, who stay
In piteous homes! who if they pray
Ask thee, oh God! for bread and day!

Think! think! ye men who daily wear
"Purple and linen"—ye, whose hair
Flings perfume on the temper'd air,
10

Think! think! I say, aye! start and think
That many tremble on death's brink—
Dying for want of meat and drink.

When tatter'd poor folk meet your eyes,
Think, friend, like Christian, in this wise,
Each one is Christ hid in disguise.

Then when you hear the tempest's roar
That thunders at your carv'd door,
Know that, it knocketh for the poor.

A LITTLE PICTURE.

Ort when pacing thro' the long and dim
Dark gallery of the Past, I pause before
A picture of the which this is a copy—
Wretched at best.

How fair she look'd, standing a-tiptoe there,
Pois'd daintily upon her little feet!
The slanting sunset falling thro' the leaves
In golden glory on her smiling face,
Upturn'd towards the blushing roses; while
The breeze that came up from the river's brink,
Shook all their clusters over her fair face;
And sported with her robe, until methought,
That she stood there clad, wondrously indeed!
In perfume and in music: for her dress
Made a low rippling sound, like little waves
That break at midnight on the tawny sands—
While all the evening air of roses whisper'd.

Over her face a rich, warm blush spread slowly,
And she laugh'd, a low, sweet, mellow laugh,
To see the branches still evade her hands—
Her small white hands, which seem'd indeed, as if
Made *only* thus to gather roses.

Then with face
All flush'd and smiling, she did nod to me
Asking my help to gather them for her:
And so, I bent the heavy clusters down,
Show'ring the rose-leaves o'er her neck and face;
Then carefully she pluck'd the very fairest one,
And court'seying playfully, gave it to me—
Show'd me her finger-tip, prick'd by a thorn,
And when I would have kiss'd it, shook her head—
Kiss'd it herself, and mock'd me with a smile!

The rose she gave me sleeps between the leaves
Of an Old Poet, where its sight oft brings
That summer evening back again to me.

MY VISIT

THE heavy curtains still were there,
The books, and ev'ry antique chair;
The pictures—each hung in its frame;
And yet the room was not the same;
For, gazing on her velvet seat,
I miss'd her form so fair and sweet.

And ne'er did that apartment seem
So very fit a place to dream—
—Thro' crimson curtains fell the sun;—
But ah! to dream—it wanted one
Whom I had thought to find within it—
They told me she had “gone that minute.”

An open book I took — methought,
Its leaves had subtle fragrance caught
From the small snowy fingers which
With perfume, could a rose enrich,
Or violets, or other posies,
Which are far sweeter than the roses.

The book was one of ancient rhymes,
Which we together read sometimes;
And pencil marks by her light hand
Show'd the last pages she had scann'd: —
'Twas an old tale, which we together
Had paus'd on oft in wintry weather.

Had it been Missal, I had not
Replac'd it in its self-same spot,
With half the reverence and care
With which I laid it in her chair;
To *me* 'twas holy; her soft touch
Maketh the meanest thing as such.

The ottoman beside her seat,
That morn had borne her dainty feet;
And soberly, it seem'd to me,
The 'broider'd dog for very glee
Still wagg'd his tail; the thought is mad,
That worsted spaniel *could* be glad?

Nay! had you ever seen dear Maude,
I *know* that you would yield accord,
That even worsted lap-dog might
Show symptoms of extreme delight
At her foot's pressure; and the flowers,
Esteem it sweeter far than showers.

Since I stood there before, to me
The room was chang'd; tho' drapery,
Tho' pictures, ornaments, and all,
Were on the floors, or on the wall:
Surpris'd, I mutter'd, "is it, is it
All so much chang'd, since my last visit?"

I sadly took my hat and cane—

Assur'd them I would "call again;"

And nibbling at my whale-bone stick,

Said to myself—"deuce take the trick!"—

Which straight reminded me—ill starr'd!—

I had forgot to leave my card.

REPLY TO A YOUNG LADY.

"I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done,
Than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

"Do as I tell you, and not as I do."—OLD SAYING.

You say, a "moral sign-post" I
Point out the road towards the sky;
And then with glance so very sly
You archly ask me, lady, why
I hesitate myself to go
In the direction which I show?

To answer is an easy task,
If you allow me but to ask
One little question, sweet, of you:—
'Tis this; should sign-posts travel too,
What would bewilder'd pilgrims do—
Celestial pilgrims, such as you?

THE MONITORY CLOCK.

HEAR the clock upon the mantle
Ticking on with measur'd chime—
Ev'ry stroke the heavy breathing
Of the flying wizard, Time.

Loud and sadly it is counting
Moments as they hurry past;
Telling that old Poet's story—
Telling time flies quick and fast.

Hear it? ticking, ticking, ticking,
Like the rain-drops from the eaves;
Think! each strong and clear vibration,
With the PAST its echo leaves

And its tones so sad and solemn,
—Some would deem the thought absurd,—
Have an eloquence surpassing
That of any spoken word.

Each one rings a proclamation,
As it through my chamber floats;
Which may simply be translated,
“We are but life’s funeral notes.”

Then, oh man! whene’er thou hearest
From the clock its sullen boom,
Pause, and pausing then remember,
Thou art nearer to the tomb.

Hast thou some old clock that standeth
Ominous, and quaint, and strange,
In thy chamber—on thy stairway—
In some cloister’d passage range?

If thou hast then sit some evening—
Gaze, and gazing hold thy breath;
See its grim hands busy writing
Out a warrant for thy death.

THE JOYS OF CHILDHOOD.

THE joys of childhood—what are they?
But rosy-tinted drops of spray
From youth's sweet fount, that gush and play
A little at the dawn of day.

The joys of childhood! who may tell
In those few words the charms that dwell?
They vibrate with a witching spell,
They steal upon us like the swell
Of richest music from a bell,
Lost in the distance blue and deep,
Where childhood's dreams have gone to sleep.

The joys of childhood, are, alas!
But as the dew upon the grass;—
Like shadows in a broken glass,
That brokenly themselves do pass;
They are the rings upon the green,
Showing where fairy hopes have been.

MEA CULPA.

COLDLY censorious,
Others condemn,
Faults so notorious—
Sad faults to them!
Cold eyes contumelious,
Sternly convey,
Reproof that is bitter,
While thine,—which were fitter—
Still lovingly glitter—
Glitter through tears;
Liquid and luminous
Still through their tears,
Never contumelious—
Not once in years!

But, brightest saint!
Those dark eyes of thine,
When weary or faint
Can refresh me like wine—
Would God! I could paint
This contrition of mine—
Then let them gleam, love,
Lights on my shrine—
Bright stars to me, love—
Radiant, divine!
And all their glances
Mine, only mine!
That, love, when kneeling—
Kneeling in pray'r—
Praying, revealing
Each penitent feeling—
To God appealing,
They may be there!

TO AMOLITA

Oh! can it ever, ever be
That I may hope to find
Some river running to the sea
Of Amolita's mind —
That I may launch upon its stream
A bark with this my last love-dream?

'Tis too much like a sea, alas!
Unbroke by breath of love,
Its sleeping waters only glass
The Heav'n that bends above,
Whose tranquil thoughts like stars are all
The lights upon its rise or fall.

It is, alas! I know, I feel,
 No pool which I beside
May in my deep devotion kneel,
 And see upon its tide,
My features gleam; ah! not for me
Can such a picture ever be—
How bitter is my destiny!

No more my bark with golden dream
 Unfurls its purple sail;
It never more on other stream
 May glide before the gale,
Which with its perfum'd breath impels
The dreamer, in love's rosy spells.

Then all alone I'll brave the blast,—
 Nay! lady, never frown!
For all above is overcast—
Gone silken sail and shatter'd mast,
 And now the bark goes down.
The dreamer's dream is o'er—his last—
Alone he now confronts the blast.

GREY BAYARD—AN ANCIENT STORY.

THE MOUNTING.

THE camp is astir, and the men muster fast;
Good Hubert, ring out on my bugle a blast:

Then saddle me Bayard! my noble grey steed!
Surely soldier had never a better at need!

He can leap any chasm I ever have found —
He can swim any river with roebuck or hound.

Hó! saddle me Bayard! the spears on the plain,
Are thick as the hairs in his torrent-like mane.

And look to the girths! see them trusty and strong —
The harvest 's before us — the day will be long —

And Death the great reaper, fair gallants, ye know,
Goeth forth this fair morning, — Ha! yonder's the foe!

And here comes grey Bayard! didst ever see, sirs,
A steed upon which ye might sooner win spurs?

What a neck! what a crest! how the strong muscles
swell —

By my fay! gallant Bayard, I love thee right well!

See his wide-spreading nostrils breathe fire and mists —
On his back I would front even Fate in the lists.

So, Bayard! ho, fellow! you pant for the fray?
How my heart throbs when mounted, my beautiful grey

And Bayard, remember: my banner so grand,
Was wrought in device by my fair Ladie's hand.

And hark to the trumpets! and hark to the drum!
Tho' the knaves are base rebels, right proudly they come!

Hear the clash, and the tramp! how they swell with a
sound

That stirreth the blood like the bay of a hound!

Now, Hubert, my lance! So, my vizor is down;
Let us ride, my gay gallants, and win us renown.

Let us rout these false caitiffs; the king's in yon group
Shake my banner abroad; let the wild falcon stoop!

THE BATTLE.

THERE was wheeling of squadrons, the charge of
 brigades—

There was clatter of axes, and clashing of blades;—

There was clangor of trumpets, and trample of steeds—

There was shouting of war-cries, and doing of deeds;—

There was rending of harness, and breaking of spears—

There was slaughter of burghers, and slaughter of peers.

And where men fell thickest that mid-summer day,

Stoutly struck a brave knight on a dark iron grey.

Like a thunder-bolt cleaving its way thro' the pines,

When the tempest-cloud bursts on the blue Appenines—

So he made thro' his foemen a terrible path—

Dealing death unto all who encounter'd his wrath.

THE HEALTH.

THE moon shone serenely. The gallant knight lay
Sorely wounded, and weary; and down was the grey,
Near a brook that in flowing seem'd singing a tune —
A song, as it were, to the beautiful moon.

The soldier was thirsty; he crawl'd to the bank —
But ere of its waters the brave noble drank,

His helmet all batter'd he fill'd with its tide —
He stagger'd again to his grey charger's side —

Then held it down feebly, and never drank first,
Tho' his lips were all parching and burning with thirst.

He sat there with patience. The steed he drank long —
What a picture, ye gentles, for pencil or song!

And tho' in the moonlight the water shone red,
He carried it next to his own dizzy head.

“Ho, Bayard! this draught is as crimson as wine —
I drink.....to thee.....Bayard.....and.....fair.....Eoline!”

A short broken pray'r, and the cross on his breast —
What need, my fair gallants, to tell you the rest!

The shadows grew long, and the silence fell deep,
Where the knight and his charger had sunk into sleep.

THE RUSTIC LOVER'S SOLILOQUY.

How like an Alexander now he stands

Between the sunshine of her eyes and me!
And yet with these embrown'd and brawny hands,
From this heart-conqueror I could set me free—
Could fling him from me, as the clod which now
Lays torn and crumpled, underneath my plough.

Yet sooth it was; I saw that he was able—

This smooth-chinn'd fop, with his pink baby face,
By dropping—as the bird in the old fable
His pebble—compliments into the vase
That held her vanity;—I say, such wiles
Were paid with blushes and o'er-running smiles.

But pshaw! my lazy horses know I dream,

Away with such fool-fancies! she *shall* see
That I can find some other sun to beam
From other eyes upon my destiny,
Which tho' tis humble, still may glow in light
From eyes more true, if not indeed more bright.

MY TWO GIFTS

I GAVE that earnest love of mine

Unto a lady fair;—

I gave it as a cup of wine,

And bless'd it with a pray'r.

Her vanity athirst drank up

The wine wherewith I fill'd the cup;

And then—her face half smile, half frown,—

She laughing shook her tresses brown

And threw the empty goblet down.

She open'd wide her splendid eyes

In very wonder and surprise;

And well I mark'd the lady's glance;

She thought to see it break, perchance.

Since then I've filled it to the brim
With wine to which the first were dim—
With wine that hath been trod and press'd,
The purest vintage of my breast;
The last, and yet, the latest—best,
As at the feast of old, we know,
The best was latest in its flow.

That goblet was my heart; and now
'Tis fill'd for one whose look,
Hath more of truth than any vow
E'er plighted on a book.
And to this lady, half divine,
I've given now the latest wine:
And I have said, "of old, we know
The best was latest in its flow."
And should this wine, my love, disdain,
The cup can ne'er be fill'd again.

THE PORTRAIT OF A CERTAIN LADY.

You ask me for "this lady's face;"
As well might I attempt to paint
The wondrous beauty and the grace
Of angel, or of saint!

Her forehead hath a warm, soft tint,
Amid her dark hair's silken flow—
A hue which gives a ruddy hint
Of sunsets over snow.

Her liquid eyes are full of spells—
I gaze upon them, and I say;
"That they are like deep, tranquil wells,
Where stars shine all the day."

Her lips, tho' autumn red, are such —
So pure, so very pure — that I
Would tremble more to dream their touch,
Than even thrice to die.

And from them floats her laugh, as clear,
As when your careless hand you fling
Across drops on a chandelier,
Making them faintly ring.

And when she laughs, warm blushes rise,
And spread across each glowing cheek,
Lighting anew her dark, bright eyes,
Until they fairly speak!

Sustaining well her matchless face,
Rises her throat so round and fair:
Half hid by faintly perfum'd lace,
And soft luxuriant hair.

And then her head is pure antique —
Its locks arranged in simple bands —
Seeming a copy from the Greek,
By poet-sculptor's hands.

Her classic head the lady bows,

It is her wont full oft to pray;

So, while she pays her saintly vows,

The painter 'll steal away.

THE HEALTH.

I DRINK to thee, dear girl,
And tho' this wine were e'en the same
Anacreon's odes have given to fame,
'Twould blush still deeper at *thy* name.

Again I fill to thee,
And as I swell the choral hymn,
The wine that flashes on the brim,
Unto thy splendid eyes seems dim.

Once more, yes, love, once more,
And, tho' this wine had been express'd
By Bacchus, for some God-like guest,
Yet, by thy name 'twere richly bless'd;

Then, love, again I fill
This goblet up with wine;
And hallow its deep crimson shine,
With a sweet name, thine, dearest, thine!

I swell the hymn again —
I sing *thy* praise — I tell them how
Regal and grand thy glorious brow,
Which cleaves the billows of thy hair
Like to a broad and snowy prow,
Cleaving a midnight sea.

LOUIS' THOUGHTS AFTER HIS BRIDAL.

YET, often times when gazing
On my young bride's radiant brow,
— Which well deserves such praising
As the kiss I gave but now,—
Comes the shadow of another—
Of one I knew of old,
In a strong and vivid vision,
With her hair that gleam'd like gold:
And her crimson lips seem speaking
In a whisper that same vow,
That she murmur'd out in breathings,
Which still ripple o'er my brow,
With the same soft liquid lustre
Gleaming from her dreamy eyes,
Like the quiet star-light streaming
From the tranquil autumn skies.

But a living, bright deception,
Did she prove herself to me;
At the gorgeous shrine of Mammon,
Long ago she bow'd her knee.
'Twas a sin that one so lovely,
All her beauty should debase;
Selling it for silks and satins,
Paltry gems and flimsy lace.
And I?—but I *am* happy—
For my bride is “passing fair,”
And my brow hangs out no banner
With the blazonry of care.

"GO THOU AND SIN NO MORE!"

Oh! when shame's sad eyes are turning
In their supplication meek,
Turn not away, with anger burning
On thy tear-unsullied cheek.

Turn not away! be not unfeeling!
Listen to the mourner's pray'r;
Have mercy on the poor one kneeling,
And o'er grief shed pity's tear.

Scorn not the fallen! hear their pleading!
Trample not the breaking heart!
But mercifully staunch its bleeding,
And the balm of hope impart.

Perchance you never felt the power
Of temptation or its spell;
Bethink thee, in unguarded hour
That the trembling suppliant fell.

Think upon the Saviour's words, when
Cups of criminals run o'er;
Teach with mildness; brother, say then
To the erring, "Sin no more!"

When some victim of disaster
Trembling in the market stands,
Think upon thy gentle Master,
Take no stone within thy hands.

For God's servant never launches
Stones at any in their shame;
Give then, brother, olive branches,
Thus the erring we reclaim.

THE EYES OF AN UNKNOWN BEAUTY.

HER bright eyes, I can see them yet;
Her eyes of darkest hue;
Black as a raven's wing of jet
Which in the summer's morn is wet
With heavy drops of dew.

I see them now; just half reveal'd,
Their white lids o'er them bow'd;
But shining still, as stars conceal'd
Will yet their subtle lustre yield
Thro' some white drifting cloud.

Soft as obscur'd moonlight that streams
Across the midnight sea;
Like memories of faded dreams,
That trouble us with fitful gleams,
Those eyes are haunting me.

LINES ON A MINIATURE.

WHEN sadness or sorrow my spirits invade—
When a moment of gloom draweth nigh,
Then I turn to this image, and tho' but a shade,
Still before it the dark shadows fly.

For I see on this brow—in its sweetness divine—
The seal of fair innocence press'd;
And find in this picture, which truly is thine,
New life—as the fainting find vigor in wine,
So a look bringeth hope to my breast.

As the Arab traversing the wild desert way,
In the sultry mid-summer of June,
Has never forgotten devoutly to pray,
When the red sun proclaimeth it noon.—

So, lady, I ne'er have forgotten to gaze
Upon this, and to offer my pray'r;
Which daily to Heav'n I votively raise,
To shield thee, and keep thee from care.

And tho' in life's desert I ne'er pitch a tent—
Altho' not a fountain it hath,
I ne'er shall forget 'twas thy kindness that lent
Some light to my desolate path.

A STORY OF THE CARACCAS VALLEY.

Dedicated to Bayard E. Hand, Esq., U. S. Navy, by his old friend and former mess-mate.

HIGH-PERCH'D upon the rocky way,
Stands a Posada stern and grey;
Which from the valley, seems as if,
A condor there had paus'd to 'light
And rest upon that lonely cliff,
From some stupendous flight;
But when the road you gain at length,
It seems a ruin'd hold of strength,
With archway dark, and bridge of stone,
By waving shrubs all overgrown,
Which cling around that ruin'd gate,
Making it look less desolate;
For here and there a wild flow'rs bloom
With brilliant hue relieves the gloom,
Which clings 'round that Posada's wall—
A sort of misty funeral pall.

The gulf spann'd by that olden arch
Might stop an army's onward march,
For dark and dim — far down below —
'Tis lost amid a torrent's flow;
And blending with the eagle's scream
Sounds dismally that mountain-stream,*
That rushes foaming down a fall
Which Chamois hunter might appal,
Nor shame his manhood, did he shrink
In treading on its dizzy brink.

In years long past, ere bridge or wall
Had spann'd that gulf and water-fall,
'Tis said — perhaps, an idle tale —
That on the road above the vale
Occurr'd as strange and wild a scene,
As ever ballad told, I ween.—
Yes, on this road which seems to be
Suspended o'er eternity;
So dim — so shadow-like — the vale
O'er which it hangs: but to my tale:

* This is a topographical inaccuracy upon which the author has ventured under the sanction of "poetic license."

Once, 'tis well known, this sunny land
Was ravag'd by full many a band
Of reckless buccaniers.
Cities were captur'd*—old men slain;
Trampled the fields of waving cane;
Or scatter'd wide the garner'd grain;
An hour wrought wreck of years!

Where'er these stern freebooters trod,
In hacienda—church of God—
Or, on the green-enamell'd sod—
They left foot-prints so deep,
That but their simple names would start
The blood back to each Spanish heart,
And make the children weep.

E'en to this day, their many crimes
The peasants sing in drowsy rhymes—
On mountain, or on-plain;
And as they sing, the plaintive song
Tells many a deed of guilt and wrong—
Each has a doleful strain!

*Panama, Carthagena, Maracaibo, and Chagres, were at various times held by the buccaniers.

* * * * *

* * * *

* * * *

One glorious morn, it so befell,
I heard the tale which I shall tell,
At that Posada dark and grey
Which stands upon the mountain way,
Between Caraccas and the sea;
So grim — so dark — it seem'd to me
Fit place for deed of guilt or sin —
Tho' peaceful peasants dwelt therein.

At midnight we, (my friends and I,)
Beneath a tranquil tropic sky,
Bestrode our mules and onward rode,
Behind the guide who swiftly strode
Up the dark mountain side; while we
With many a jest and repartee —
With jingling swords, and spurs, and bits —
Made trial of our youthful wits.
Ah! we were gay, for we were young
And care had never on us flung —

But, to my tale: the purple sky
Was thick o'erlaid with burning stars,
And oft the breeze that murmur'd by,
Brought dreamy tones from soft guitars,
Until we sank in silence deep.
It was a night for thought not sleep—
It was a night for song and love—
The burning planets shone above—
The Southern Cross was all a-blaze—
—'Tis long since it then met my gaze!—
Above us, whisp'ring in the breeze,
Were many strange, gigantic trees,
And in their shadow, deep and dark,
Slept many a pile of mould'ring bones;
For tales of murder fell and stark,
Are told by monumental stones
Flung by the passer's hand, until,
The place grows to a little hill.
Up through the shade we rode, nor spoke,
Till suddenly the morning broke.
Beneath we saw in purple shade
The mighty sea; above display'd,
A thousand gorgeous hues which met
In tints that I remember yet;

But which I may not paint, my skill,
Alas! would but depict it ill —
E'en Claude has never given hints
On canvas of such splendid tints!
The mountains, which ere dawn of day
I'd liken'd unto friars grey —
Gigantic friars clad in grey —
Stood now like kings, wrapp'd in the fold
Of gorgeous clouds around them roll'd —
Their lofty heads all crown'd with gold;
And many a painted bird went by
Strange to my unaccustom'd eye —
Their plumage mimicking the sky.
O'er many a league, and many a mile —
Crag — pinnacle — and lone defile —
All nature woke! — woke with a smile —
As tho' the morning's golden gleam
Had broken some enchanting dream,
But left its soft impression still,
On lofty peak and dancing rill.
With many a halt and many a call,
At last we saw the rugged wall,
And gaz'd upon the ruin'd gate
Which even then look'd desolate,

For that Posada so forlorn
Seem'd sad e'en on so gay a morn!
The heavy gate at length unbarr'd,
We rode within the busy yard,
Well scatter'd o'er with many a pack;
For on that wild, romantic track,
The long and heavy-laden trains
Toil seaward from the valley's plains.
And often on its silence swells
The distant tinkle of the bells,
While muleteers' shrill, angry cries
From the dim road before you rise;
And such were group'd in circles round
Playing at *monté* on the ground;
Each swarthy face that met my eye
To thought of honesty gave lie,
In each fierce orb there was a spark
That few would care to see by dark—
And many a sash I saw gleam thro'
The keen *cuchillo** into view.
Within; the place was rude enough—
The walls of clay—in color buff—

* *Cuchillo*—a knife.

A pictur'd saint—a cross or so—
A hammock swinging to and fro—
A gittern by the window laid
Whereon the morning breezes play'd,
And its low tones and broken parts
Seem'd like some thoughtless minstrel's arts—
A rugged table in the floor—
Ran thro' this homely *comedor*.^{*}
Here, weary as you well may think,
An hour or so we made abode,
To give our mules both food and drink,
Before we took again the road;
And honestly, our own repast
Was that of monks from lenten fast.
The meal once o'er; our stores replac'd;
We gather'd where the window fac'd
Upon the vale, and gaz'd below
Where mists from a mad torrent's flow
Were dimly waving to and fro.
Meanwhile, the old guitar replied
To the swift fingers of our guide:
His voice was deep, and rich, and strong,
And he himself a child of song.

^{*} *Comedor*—a dining room.

At first the music's liquid flow
Was soft and plaintive — rich and low;
The murmur of a fountain's stream
Where sleeping water-lilies dream;
Or, like the breathing of love-vows
Beneath the shade of orange-boughs;
And then more stirring grew his song —
A strain which swept the blood along!
And as he sang, his eyes so sad —
Which lately wore the look of pain,
Danc'd with a gleam both proud and glad,
Awaken'd by his fervid strain —
His face now flush'd and now grew pale —
The song he sang, was this, my tale.

A fort above Laguayra stands,
Which all the town below commands.
The damp moss clings upon its walls —
The rotting drawbridge slowly falls —
Its dreary silentness appals!
The iron-bars are thick with rust
And slowly moulder into dust;
The roofless turrets show the sky,
The moats below are bare and dry —

No captain issues proud behest—

The guard-room echoes to no jest;

As I have said, within those walls

The very silentness appals!

In other days it was not so—

The Spanish banner, long ago,

Above the turrets tall did flow.

And many a gallant soldier there

With musket or with gleaming spear,

Pac'd on the battlements that then

Were throng'd with tall and proper men.

But this was many a year ago—

A long shot back for mem'ry's bow!

The Govenor here made his home

Beneath the great hall's gilded dome.

And here his lady-wife he brought

From Spain, across the sea;

And sumptuous festival was made,

Where now the tangled ivy's shade

Is hanging drearily.

The lady was both fair and young—

Fair as a poet ever sung:

And well they lov'd; so it is told;—

Had plighted troth in days gone by,

Ere he had won his spurs of gold,
Or, gain'd his station high.
And often from the martial keep
They'd sail together on the deep;
Or, wander many a weary mile
In lonely valley or defile.

Well; once upon this road, a pair,
A lady, and a cavalier,
Were riding side by side.
And she was young and "passing fair,"
With crimson lips and ebon hair—
She was the gallant's bride!
And he was cast in manly mould,
His port was high, and free, and bold—
Fitting a cavalier!
But now bent reverently low
His crest's unsullied plume of snow
Play'd 'mid the lady's hair.

This knight with orders on his breast,
The Governor, as you have guess'd—
The lady was his wife, and they,
Alone were on the road that day;—

Their horses moving at a walk,
And they engaged in earnest talk,
 Low words and sweet they spoke;
The lady smil'd, and blush'd, and then,
Smiling and blushing, spoke again;
 When sleeping echo woke—
Woke with the shouts of a wild band
Who urg'd with spur and heavy hand
 Their steeds along the way.

Gave but one look the cavalier—
Murmur'd a vow the lady fair—
His right arm is around her thrown
Her form close-gather'd to his own;
While his brave steed, white as the snow,
Darts like an arrow from the bow;
His hoofs fall fast as tempest rain
Spurning the road that rings again.
Onward the race!—now fainter sounds
The yell and whoop; but still like hounds
The pirate-band behind him rush
Breaking the mountains solemn hush.

On speeds he now — his steed so white —
Far in advance, proclaims his flight
God speed him and his bride!
But ah! that chasm's fearful gape
Seems to forbid hope of escape,
He *cannot* turn aside.

He bends his head; is it in pray'r?
Is it to shed a bitter tear?
Or utter craven vow?
No; 'tis to gaze into those eyes
Which are to him love-litten skies —
To kiss his lady's brow.
And must he on? full well he knew
That none were spar'd by that wild crew —
Never a lady fair.
And now a shout, a fierce halloo,
Told that they were again in view —
Close to his ear a bullet sings,
And then the distant carbine rings.
Why pales the cavalier?
And why does he now set his teeth
And draw his dagger from its sheath.

He breasts his charger at the leap—
He pricketh him full sharp and deep:
He leaps, and then with heaving flank
Gains footing on the other bank:
A moment—'mid the pass's gloom,
Vanish both veil and dancing plume—
It seems a dream. No! there is proof,
The clatter of a flying hoof,
And too, the lady's steed remains,
With empty seat, and flying reins;
And then is borne to that wild rout,
A long and proud triumphant shout.
And he who led the pirate-band,
Urg'd on his horse, with spur and hand;
The long locks drifted from his brow,
Like midnight waves from storm-vex'd prow;
And darkly flash'd his eyes of jet
Beneath the brows which almost met.
Stern was his face; but war and crime,
—For he had sinn'd in many a clime—
Had plough'd it deeper far than time.
He was their chief: will he draw rein?
Will he the yawning rift refrain?
And with his halting band remain?

He rais'd up in his stirrups, high,
Better the chasm to descry,
And measure with his hawk-like eye,
While his dark steed begrim'd with toil,
Tried madly, vainly, to recoil!
A mutter'd curse—a sabre goad—
Full at the leap the robber rode:
Great God! his horse near dead and spent,
Scarce halfway o'er the chasm went.
That fearful rush, and daring bound,
Was follow'd by a crushing sound—
A sudden, awful knell!
For down, more than a thousand feet,
Where mist and mountain-torrent meet,
That reckless rider fell.

His band drew up:—they could not speak,
For long, and loud, his charger's shriek
Was heard in an unearthly scream,
Above that roaring mountain-stream—
Like fancied sound in fever'd dream,
When the sick brain with crazy skill
Weaves phantasies of woe and ill.

Some said: no steed gave forth that yell,
And hinted solemnly of—hell!
And others said, that from his vest
A miniature with haughty crest
And features like the lady's 'pressed,
Fell on the rugged bank:
But who he was, none know or tell;
They simply point out where he fell
When horse and horseman sank.
Like Ravenswood he left no trace—
Tradition only points the place.

Rude is my hand, and rude my lay--
Rude as the Inn, time-worn and grey,
Where resting, on the mountain-way,
I heard the tale which I have tried
To tell to thee; and saw the wide
Deep rift—ten yards from side to side—
Great God! it was a fearful ride
The robber took that day.

THREE SUMMER STUDIES.

I.

THE cock hath crow'd. I hear the doors unbarr'd;

Down to the moss-grown porch my way I take,

And hear, beside the well within the yard,

Full many an ancient, quacking, splashing drake,...

And gabbling goose, and noisy brood-hen — all

Responding to yon strutting gobbler's call.

The dew is thick upon the velvet grass —

The porch-rails hold it in translucent drops,

And as the cattle from th' inclosure pass,

Each one, alternate, slowly halts and crops

The tall, green spears, with all their dewy load,

Which grow beside the well-known pasture-road.

A lustrous polish is on all the leaves —

The birds flit in and out with varied notes —

The noisy swallows twitter 'neath the eaves —

A partridge-whistle thro' the garden floats,
While yonder gaudy peacock harshly cries,
As red and gold flush all the eastern skies,

Up comes the sun: thro' the dense leaves a spot

Of splendid light drinks up the dew; the breeze
Which late made leafy music dies; the day grows hot,

And slumbrous sounds come from marauding bees:
The burnish'd river like a sword-blade shines,
Save where 'tis shadow'd by the solemn pines.

II.

OVER the farm is brooding silence now —

No reaper's song — no raven's clangor harsh —

No bleat of sheep — no distant low of cow —

No croak of frogs within the spreading marsh —

No bragging cock from litter'd farm-yard crows,

The scene is steep'd in silence and repose.

A trembling haze hangs over all the fields —

The panting cattle in the river stand

Seeking the coolness which its wave scarce yields.

It seems a Sabbath thro' the drowsy land:

So hush'd is all beneath the Summer's spell,

I pause and listen for some faint church bell.

The leaves are motionless—the song-bird's mute—

The very air seems somnolent and sick :

The spreading branches with o'er-ripen'd fruit

Show in the sunshine all their clusters thick,

While now and then a mellow apple falls

With a dull sound within the orchard's walls.

The sky has but one solitary cloud,

Like a dark island in a sea of light ;

The parching furrows 'twixt the corn-rows plough'd

Seem fairly dancing in my dazzled sight,

While over yonder road a dusty haze

Grows reddish purple in the sultry blaze.

III.

That solitary cloud grows dark and wide,
While distant thunder rumbles in the air,
A fitful ripple breaks the river's tide —
The lazy cattle are no longer there,
But homeward come in long procession slow,
With many a bleat and many a plaintive low.

Darker and wider-spreading o'er the west
Advancing clouds, each in fantastic form,
And mirror'd turrets on the river's breast
Tell in advance the coming of a storm —
Closer and brighter glares the lightning's flash
And louder, nearer, sounds the thunder's crash.

The air of evening is intensely hot,

The breeze feels heated as it fans my brows—

Now sullen rain-drops patter down like shot—

Strike in the grass, or rattle 'mid the boughs.

A sultry lull: and then a gust again,

And now I see the thick-advancing rain.

It fairly hisses as it comes along,

And where it strikes bounds up again in spray

As if 'twere dancing to the fitful song

Made by the trees, which twist themselves and sway

In contest with the wind which rises fast,

Until the breeze becomes a furious blast.

And now, the sudden, fitful storm has fled,

The clouds lie pil'd-up in the splendid west,

In massive shadow tipp'd with purplish red

Crimson or gold. The scene is one of rest;

And on the bosom of yon still lagoon

I see the crescent of the pallid moon.

THE MINSTREL-LOVER'S LAY

WERE I a knight, those hands of her's—
Those little hands so small and white,
Alone should buckle on my spurs—
The golden spurs which prov'd me knight.

Were I a knight, my pennon's fold
Should wear device which they had wrought
To nerve me as the battle roll'd
With inspiration from the thought
That *they* had blazon'd it in gold,—
—Fit emblem of her purity!—
And tho' the foeman came in hosts,
Wild as the billows of the sea
That thunders on Norwegian coasts,
I still would fling abroad its fold—
To win it from me, life the price;
For I would sleep all stark and cold,
Ere they should sully its device.

Those hands—hast ever seen them?—nay;

Then marvel not that thus I sing

Their loveliness in this poor lay;—

They well might wake a string

More noble than this trembling now,

To tell how wondrous fair their hue,

White as Madonna's stainless brow,

Or lily wet with moonlit dew;

And yet they have a rosy sign

Just ling'ring on their dainty tips,

As if she 'd dipp'd them in red wine

And dried them on her crimson lips!

Were I a knight—now wild the dream!

“The days of chivalry are o'er”—

Were I a knight—'tis best, you deem,

That I should dream such dreams no more;

Nay; I will dream, and dreaming, sing,

Altho' the dream elude my grasp—

Will tell you that, were I a king,

I'd give my diadem to clasp

Those little hands within my own—

To feel them trembling answer mine;—

For this—aye! but for this alone

I'd leap down from earth's proudest throne,
Wild in that blessed moment

With the ecstasy divine,

As tho' I'd drunk a goblet

Of Jove's nectar mix'd with wine

TO * * * * *

THE days have been, *have* been, alas!
When fancies in my brain,
Rose like the bubbles in the glass,
Where foams the bright champagne;
Or danc'd like shadows on the grass
That flutter as they swiftly pass
After an April rain.
Ah! fraught the thought with bitter pain!
The days *have* been, alas!
But now my song is faint—in vain
I strive, a golden-number'd strain
For thee, sweet one, to wake.
In vain I strive to frame a line,
Worthy those wondrous charms of thine—
No bubble glitters on the wine,
Which in my youth I thought divine.

Thine eyes are full of magic gleams—
Are full of magic deep,
Lighting the darkness up with dreams
Till slumber is not sleep—
Making my slumber with their beams
A phosphorescent deep,
All quiv'ring in a golden glow,
In which my soul doth float and flow—
A very heav'n of heav'ns below.
Thine eyes! they have a charm for me,
Greater than stars for rapt Chaldee,
In golden, olden times when he,
Gaz'd upward at the starry sea,
In sad and solemn reverie,—
When long had sunk the evening sun
Behind the walls of Babylon.
Thine eyes—ah me! the gift 's not mine
To tell how splendidly they shine,
Those wondrous, large, dark eyes of thine!

Thy form is fair; have I not seen
 When thou wert standing in the sun,
 That straight the wither'd grass grew green —
 The vines in very glee did run?
 And this was when thy shadow fell
 Upon them like a blessed spell;
 And as thy drap'ry brush'd the flow'rs,
 It woke them like the summer show'rs;
 The simple contact gave such pow'rs,
 They blossom'd through long solstice hours.
 And too, next day I saw, myself,
 Footprints mark'd out upon the green,
 In blossoms strange and beautiful,
 Where your small feet had been.
 And when my heart was like the grass,
 All parching up and growing sear,
 Lo! where thy shadow did but pass
 New verdure started there!
 And now Hope's blossoms bloom again,
 Would I could wake a worthy strain
 To her who bade them live again!

A WINTER NIGHT AT SEA.

THE bell toll'd eight; the watch was called —

The night was wild I trow!

One that I never can forget,

For all the deck was thickly set

With sheets of ice and snow;

And the hail fell fast

On the driving blast,

God! how the wind did blow!

While a ghastly light

Thro' the dreary night

Came from the pallid snow.

To the weather-shrouds I clung amain,
When thro' the driving snow and rain,
—In a moment's lull,—
I saw a hull
Shorn of her spars, flit by;
Close, close abeam,
In the ghastly gleam
That lit the winter-sky.
From the frozen deck
I saw a wreck,
Like a phantom-ship drive by.
Away! away!
Thro' mist and spray,
And thro' the driving snow,
She hurried past,
Nor sail, nor mast,
Did that poor vessel show;
And thro' the snows
There upward rose—
Great God! how wild a cry!
And well, full well, that phrenzied sound
Told where the drifting ship was bound
Upon that winter-sea.
15*

A SEPTEMBER MORNING.

LAST night I heard the heavy blast
Like charging horsemen trample past;
While lightning flash'd, and thunder peal'd,
As if two foes that would not yield,
Maintain'd above, their stubborn field.

And all the walks are now afloat,
Each bed a bastion with its moat;
And leaves are thick beneath my tread,
Like piled-up heaps of a battles dead;
And all along each valley's marge,
They lie like men when deadly charge
Has swept along their line and left
The marks which hoof and sword have cleft.

While yon old tree stands 'mid the bow'rs,
Like Lear half drown'd by chilly show'rs;
And e'en the toads hop stiff and lame —
The little birds are still more tame;
And slowly curls up in the sun,
The smoke from distant sportsman's gun,
That echoes dismally around,
The saddest, first September sound.

THE NIGHT WE PARTED.

THE night we parted, I remember well

Your tone—your look—the pressure of your hand;
And never yet had that one word, “farewell,”

So strange a power, and so sad a spell,

As when we parted. On the yellow sand
I linger'd, till the deep'ning darkness gave
No sign of where your swift bark cleft the wave.

Bright was the wake she left upon the bay,

As if the angels that sustain the stars*
Had slumb'ring dropp'd them 'mid the dancing spray,
So, in my heart's once quiet, trackless way
You have, dear lady left a line of light
That trembling glitters in its dreary night.

*An Oriental superstition.—See Sale's Preliminary Discourse to the Koran.

That parting was the saddest I had known;

Tho' in my wild, and somewhat strange career,

I've look'd on aspirations 'round me strown

Like wither'd leaves by Autumn-breezes blown;

But ne'er till then had felt the tear

Start burning to my eyes as when I took,

Upon that night, my long, last, lingering look.

When not a breeze is stirring, the long swell

Tossing, and heaving, on the mighty deep,

Will of late tempest to the seaman tell;

So, lady, since our late and sad farewell,

My heart's deep pulses tumultuously keep

A throb that tells of tempest lately past,

As billows in the calm tell of the blast.

And tho', sweet lady, we ne'er meet again,

Altho' I ne'er may see your sunny face;

Still will I think in sunshine and in rain

Of your young form, and its ethereal grace—

Will in my dreams each lovely feature trace

And when your image in my mind appears

'Twill be a rainbow painted on life's tears.

A NIGHT IN SPRING.

In the night season,
Under the moon,
Flowers are sleeping,
Dreaming of June.

All the young roses,
Steep'd in perfume,
Waiting for morning,
Sigh in the gloom.

Slowly the vapor
Breaks into gems,
Making the flowers
Pearl diadems.

Over the waters—

Over the stream

Mosaic shadows

Fitfully gleam.

Making a pavement

Fit for the stars,

Upon it riding, in

Luminous cars.

Over the woodlands,

Cynthia's rim,

Looks in the midnight

Misty and dim:

Over the tree-tops—

Over the stream—

Shedding her lustre,

Soft as a dream;

Dreamt by an angel

Sleeping afar,—

Sleeping and dreaming,

Close to a star.

Silent the woodlands,
 Silent the shore;
Silent the waters —
 Silent the oar.—

Silent and tranquil,
 Lonely and still,
Sleepeth the river,
 Under the hill.

Sounds the most dulcet,
 Harp or guitar,
Midnight so lovely
 Only could mar.

Watching this picture
 Stretch'd on the grass,—
It is no wonder,
 My soul went to mass.

If thou wouldst, brother,
 Summon good pow'rs—
Pray as *I* pray'd, with
 The trees and the flow'rs.

THE NIGHT WIND.

THE night-wind is calling in desolate tone,
While the heavy rain falling, responds to its moan.

Oh! the night is so dreary, its gloom so profound,
That my head groweth weary with hearing the sound

Of dismal rain dashing down in the dark street,
And, at intervals, crashing of boughs as they meet

While the wind in its fleeting, sobs out 'mid the rain,
Like some one entreating for mercy in vain.

And the deep thunder rolls thro' the storm-fretted night,
Like the guns of an army, in sullen, slow flight.

Ah! the night is a sad one; the wind hath a tone,
That fills me with fancies while seated alone.

And she;—does she sleep to this lullaby sound
Of the drops as they leap to the roof and rebound?

And she!—does she dream? and if dreaming, of me?
Lull'd still by the stream, from the roof or the tree?

Oh! would I could number her breathings to-night—
Could watch in her slumber her smile of delight,

As some angel-like vision spreads wings in the light
Of gardens Elysian, around her to-night,—

As in her pure slumber, her bright fancies glide,
Like a flock of white swans on a moon-litten tide!

But vain are these dreamings—but clouds in my mind—
Their rich golden gleamings leave darkness behind;

As red Autumn sunsets, when faded are cold,
And cheerless, where late they were crimson and gold.

So, my heart, where but lately those wild visions were,
Is as dark as this midnight, as dark and as drear.

THE RESIGNATION OF HOPE.

Ан, lady! I have lov'd thee well,
Have lov'd thee well for many years,
And now that I must say "farewell,"
My heart feels as 'twould burst in tears.

Yet, fare thee well. I know, alas!
That love of thine I'll ne'er possess—
No more, hard fate!—thy name may pass
My lips, save lady, once—to bless.

Like snow-flake in an oak's brown leaf,
Thy little hand in mine would be—
But now I know with bitter grief
'Twill never wear a ring for me.

That dream so full of life and joy,
Prov'd but a cloud above life's main,
Which watching like an idle boy,
I saw at last dissolve in rain.

And now the last light that gleam'd o'er
Life's Hellespont, is quench'd in night;
And I may never reach the shore,
Since it has vanish'd—cheating light!

And so, in darkness on the sea,
Leander-like I drift about;
And his the fate that waits for me—
The beacon of my life is out!

Here cease love's hopes, and love's alarms—
Here the last bitter struggle ends—
Hope, the spent swimmer, folds its arms,
And to the yawning deep descends.

THE MOTHER TO HER SON

WHENE'ER I hear those little feet,
My heart like morning's drum doth beat;
It rolls, "To arms, to arms!" my sweet
And only child to hear thy feet.

Aye! it doth flutter quick and fast
As sail just loosen'd from the mast,
Doth swell, as wave before the blast,
Whene'er I hear thee bounding past.

And when I hear thy laughter, child,
Ring in its music free and wild
From the stern cares of life beguil'd,
I feel with thee my heart hath smil'd.

And when thou art upon my knee,
Looking so lovingly at me,
I'd give, wer't mine, of life the fee
To purchase happiness for thee.

And as I part each silken tress
And mark thy more than loveliness—
As I return each wild caress,
'Twere sin to love thee more—or less.

And when thy kisses fall in show'rs—
Soft as the early summer hours,
I pray unto the Heavenly pow'rs
To strew thy path thro' life with flow'rs.

And often when thou art asleep,
Half-fill'd with terror do I creep
—Because thy slumber is so deep—
To see if it is *only* sleep.

And yet I feel, how very weak
How vain it is for me to seek
My love in human words to speak—
I can but cover thy soft cheek

And lips, and hair, and laughing eyes,
With kisses softer, than the sighs
That in the childish bosom rise,
As with a look of sad surprise
Thou see'st tears tremble in these eyes.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE.

BENEATH the Autumn forest leaves

I saw the Evening binding sheaves;
Aye! in that forest grand and old
Thro' which the yellow sunset roll'd,
The licitor Eve bound sheaves of gold;
Beneath the leaves bound sheaves of light,
Fascies to bear before the night—
Which Roman-like, came grandly down,
Beleaguering many a mighty town;
Encamping on full many a plain,
Where tent-like stood the stack'd-up grain.
So like a camp, thou'dst think almost
The sentry pac'd upon his post—
The sentry-phantom and the host.

Died one by one each sylvan sound;

The distant baying of a hound—
The dreary cawing of the crows
That lately thro' the forest rose—
All into solemn silence froze.

The sun was down, and thro' the shade
The evening wind began its play;
But frighten'd at the noise it made,
Stole timidly away.

Then lost amid the forest wild,
Amid its vastness dark and dim,
It sobb'd out like a frighten'd child,
Scar'd at the shadows grim —
Which ghost-like flutter'd thro' the wood,
And crept beneath each giant-tree,
Until, methought, an Indian stood
Close, very close to me —
So close, and such my fancy's cheat,
I even heard his stealthy feet
Tip back around the tree.
And then full many a legend wild,
And many a story strange and stark,
Throng'd in my brain; till like a child
I trembled at the dark.

THE MENTAL SEXTON.

"When bards are removed to their place; when harps are hung in Selma's hall; then comes a voice to Ossian and awakes his soul! It is the voice of years that are gone! they roll before me with all their deeds."

OSSIAN.

MEM'RY to-night hath sadly turn'd
Into a sexton stern and grim,
Who worketh slowly in the past
Chequer'd with shadows dim.

Uncoffining full many a hope;
While solemn bells ring midnight's chime,
He diggeth in that grave-yard fill'd
Right well fill'd up by time

I stand upon the brink of graves
While wails the wind with sobbing moans;
And see this sexton fling up dust
And ashes mix'd with bones.

This skull was once, how fair! how fair!

And *now*—it speaks but of the dead;

Where are its locks of sunny hair?

Its lips once full and red?

Where are the eyes once proud and wild,

Beneath the forehead's ample scope?

Where are the cheeks that flush'd and smil'd?

This thing was once a hope!

Out! back into the clay! that smile

Can never lure me on again,

To seek with thee the phantom-isle

Thou show'dst me o'er life's main.

Thy scarlet lips but told me lies;

Did they not cast a horoscope,

Painting the future with rich dyes?

And all a cheat false hope!

For hath my life not been to me

Like some dark, desolated plain,

Stretch'd out 'twixt woodlands and the sea,—

Where ripen'd never yet the grain

Planted by Hope; where sweeps the blast
And winter-rain falls thick and fast;
Where all is dark and overcast
Such is life's picture in the Past.

TO LOU.

THY forehead, Lou, is very fair,
Is beautifully smooth, and low,
And seems amid thy dark hair's flow
Like marble crusted o'er with snow,
And lighted by the full moon's glow.

Thine eyes astronomers might deem
Stars in their liquid light divine,
And as they luminously shine—
Those wondrous, large, dark eyes of thine,
They warm my heart like flash of wine.

The cunning florist, did he see
Those little ears so white and fair
Would willingly upon them swear
That, they were lilies in thy hair—
Twin-lilies in thy raven-hair.

They'd fool a bee, they'd fool a bee,
Those crimson lips of thine, dear Lou,
I swear it by their sanguine hue,
Those lips a very bee might woo,
Thinking them roses damp with dew.

Those hands of thine might cheat the waves
If thou wouldst but their fingers close;
For then the waters would suppose
They saw a sea-shell lin'd with rose —
Yes, Lou, I *know* the waves would think
They saw a sea-shell white and pink,
From which a very God might drink,
And tremble on its rosy brink.

They'd fool the slumb'ring flowers, Lou,
Those very little, little feet,
Until they dreamt dreams soft and sweet
Of rain-drops laughing in the heat,
So perfect is thy footfall's cheat;
And echo loves to count each beat,
And whispers in a tone most sweet,
Her praises of thy little feet.

Of what thou might'st delude, dear Lou,
These many things are but a part;
But proud, I say, one trusting heart
Hath ne'er Lou, been deceiv'd—thy art
Is *never* to dissemble.

LINES WRITTEN ON A HYACINTH.

'Twas an evening dark and shady,
When a certain nameless lady
Gave this hyacinth to me;
And I took it, never deeming,
That its petals fair and white,
Would appeal to me in dreaming,
On that very self-same night.

It had sweet bells, three in number,
Three in number, only three;
And they rang out in my slumber,
Peals, which music would encumber
With its softest melody.

Long I had been calmly sleeping,
 But how long I cannot guess,
 (For the moon no watch was keeping
 In her solemn loveliness;)
 When I dreamt that I was sleeping,
 Lull'd by a mysterious swell
 Of delicious music creeping
 From each white and perfum'd bell;
 Which distinctly, clearly fell,
 With a drowsy, dreamy spell,
 From their leaves
 Making music soft as rain-drops
 When they dance upon the eaves.

Then, methought, I woke from slumber —
 That I open'd wide my eyes —
 That I saw those bells (in number
 Only three) distinctly rise;
 While a radiance pale and moonlike,
 On their trembling petals hung,
 And that light seem'd also tune-like,
 For each undulation flung
 A music and a melody,
 As if bright angels sung.

17*

WRITTEN ON LEAVING THE U. S.
IN THE SLOOP OF WAR "CYANE."

I see yon dreary sand-beach yet,
And the ghost-like light-house tall,
Which by the ocean's wave is wet,
For there the billows foam and fret,
Like a mountain water-fall.

The night comes on: the light-house sinks,
But flingeth o'er the sea,
A light that winks
And fades and blinks,
In sooth right drowsily!

The spray flits by in whiter flow
And gathers fast the fog;
The hammocks have been "pip'd below"—
The bell rings out, deep, stern, and slow—
The reefer marks the foam, like snow,
Fret round the drifting log.

The moon comes up, with a ghastly light,
That struggles thro' the mist;
And a ghostly white,
Are the sails to-night—
Like spectres they, I wist!

My heart is sad; tears in these eyes—
Tears in these eyes to-night?—
When swift I go to sunny skies
Where perfum'd flowers of rarest dyes,
Bloom in a blaze of light.

Where purple mountains rise from seas
Where painted dolphins play;
Where blossoms cluster on the trees,
So sweet, that the enamor'd breeze
Makes love to them all day.—

Tears in these eyes! Ah, Mother mine:

I little thought so soon,

I should be on the heaving brine,

Away from that deep love of thine,

Wearing the pilgrim's shoon.

A MEMORY.

A CATARACT of curls unbound,
Her snowy forehead fell around;
Like torrent broken by the shock
Of leaping o'er some marble rock,
Smooth'd by the fall, till it did gleam
In pallid beauty thro' the stream —
More beautiful than any dream
That ever yet hath wildly flown
To dwell in white Carrara stone.

Her loose robe rippled fitfully,
 Its ample volumes waving wide;
 Showing her matchless symmetry;
 Until, in sooth, it seem'd to me,
 That Venus, lolling on the sea,
 Had scarce with her—in all her pride,
 Just risen from the rosy tide,
 And blushing like a new-made bride—
 One little moment e'er have vied.

* * * * *

And this was in another clime,
 Where life glides by, a golden rhyme,
 Set unto music's mellow chime;
 And in that soft and slumb'rous time,
 Silent we sat. She watch'd the stars,
 Wheeling in their eternal cars,
 While the faint hum of soft guitars
 Stole thro' the orange-trees, and crept
 Where Naiades in the fountain wept.
 I gaz'd upon a heaven, but mine
 Was in *her* face, more than divine—
 The dreamy face of Isoline.

Since then; ah! years have flown.

Yet now

I sit beneath the orange-bough —

I feel her breath upon my brow

I listen to her whisper'd vow.

Ah me! I wake; the dream is o'er —

Long have I left that golden shore,

Where dwelt this maiden fair whose vow

Was murmur'd 'neath the orange-bough.

'T WAS WRONG.

Ah, lady! it was scarcely wise,
'To fan his forehead with soft sighs,
And gaze upon him with fond eyes.

Ah, lady! it was scarcely meet,
To see him kneeling at your feet,
And listen to his words so sweet.

'Twas wrong while ye were wandering there,
Out in the moonlight calm and clear,
To pass your fingers thro' his hair.

Ye wander'd late: ye wander'd long;
You listen'd to full many a song,
And list'ning, lady, knew 'twas wrong!

* * * * *

Another night, and he was there,
His eyes had now a strange, wild glare—
His face all pallid with despair.

* * * * *

He had few ducats in his purse,
—This of itself a bitter curse,—
'Twas deadly wrong to make it worse!

He offer'd more than gold can buy—
For what you yet perchance may sigh,
Aye, lady; long before you die.

But you—your heart was e'en then sold
For silks and laces, gems and gold,
Unto a lover grey and old.

* * * * *

All deeds have payment, soon or late;
Upon the poor, upon the great,
Comes down the ruthless hand of fate.

The time will come, for come it must,
When you, crush'd to the very dust,
Shall deem your idol, gold—as rust.

You 'll think upon that stripling slim—
Bitter the doom you meted him,
'Twill haunt you like a phantom grim.

Dead! where that moonlight-night ye trod,
'His ghastly face—the bloody sod—
Will interpose 'twixt you and God.

FIRE-SIDE FANCIES.

I LOVE to gaze in the fire's blaze,
And hear the winds without,
Sing a lullaby, as they sob and sigh,
In their wild, nocturnal rout.
And I love to mark, each meteor-spark,
Wheel up in the chimney's gloom,
While the red flame gleams
In its ruddy streams,
Till in sooth it seems—a plume—
A plume as it glances,
And flickers and dances,
In motion now fast, now slow,
Till 'twere no hard task,
To fashion a casque,
Hid under its crimson flow.

Then 'tis sweet to hear
From my great arm-chair,
The tempest's wild sob and moan,
As it sweepeth past
Like a trumpet's blast,
By a giant-minstrel blown.

Then to list again,
As its dying strain
Is hush'd to an echo slight—
Till its tone is mute,
And its boding hoot
Is lost in the vaults of night.
And when I am nodding,
To think I hear plodding
Some one in the drifted snow;
But to find that the feet
Were a cunning deceit,
Their sound 'mid the embers glow.

Awake; to evoke
'Mid the vap'ry smoke,
Wild shapes, and to see them pass,
In a pageant strange
That will ever change,
Like forms in a wizard's glass.

Now a turret's crown
Looketh proudly down,
On the pinnacles of a blazing town;
Then as the strong draught rumbles,
All the Moscow city tumbles,
Into hoary ashes crumbles!
Down go turrets, down go towers,
And the sparks fall in red showers!
Then, abstracted from the ruddy
Fire-flames, to plunge in study,
Or to lapse in dreams ne'er spoken,
Dreamt by me in that old, oaken
Chair, so easy and commodious—
With its carving quaint and shining—
With its faded crimson lining,
Where I sit, my dreams entwining,
Till I wake up in the cold.

And the fire as it smoulders,
Preacheth well to grave beholders,
Telling how the splendid flashes
Of Hope's visions soon are o'er.
That when she but sinks her lashes,
They all turn to dust and ashes,
Dust and ashes—nothing more!
And I wake up from such dreamings
Wiser, better than before;
Thinking on the text and sermon,
Dust and ashes—nothing more!

THE LOVER TO THE MAIDEN. .

THIS hand altho' it trembles now,—
Ah, hear me, love, while I avow!—
Would guard from care thy angel-brow;
 Would toil for thee—
Until it met death's iron grasp
And stiffen'd in his icy clasp
 No longer free.

And like the Roman youth of old
Whose daring history hath told—
—Tho' in good sooth, I am not bold,
 Yet still—like him
I'd give my hand unto the flame
To save thy cheek one blush of shame,
 Or, tear-drop dim.

He, for his country did the deed;
Thou art my country—all—my creed;
Thy loving smile the only need
 That I would claim.
Yet, love, the anguish I would brave
Of flame, or yet a living grave,
 To shield thy name!

The voice that quivering whispers now
In many a deep and earnest vow—
That breathes upon thy very brow,
 Would never, love,
Instil into thy list'ning ear
A tale which angels might not hear
 In courts above.

Whate'er my soul's unwritten creed—
Believe me, it is truth indeed,
That I would rather dying bleed
 At ev'ry vein
Than murmur what would make thee blush
E'en in the midnight's solemn hush,
 Or, give thee pain.

Then, dearest, trust me, trust me, and
By this kiss printed on thy hand,
And by the heav'ns above us, grand,—

I swear that I,
The deep devotion of this night,
Will keep as yonder planet bright,
Until I die!

EXTRACT FROM MY LOG-BOOK

OFF PORT AU PRINCE.

THE red sun sinks amid a blaze of glory,
Lighting the heaving wave with many a ray,
While the long shadow of yon promontory
Falls in its darkness half-way o'er the bay,
Like to a giant at the close of day,
Who lays him down to woo the gentle breeze,
Deep lost, perchance, in dreamy reveries.

Gorgeous the clouds as plume of seraph's wing,
Crimson, and gold, and violet they grow,
While on the billows dancing by, they fling
A light that dyes each tossing crest of snow,
— Making a mimicry of Heav'n below; —
While the white sails that dot the spreading bay,
Grow faintly red in this last flush of day.

And o'er the waters comes a distant song,
Half blended with the night-wind's soothing sigh;
Would I a scene like this could but prolong?—
Could fix the hues in yonder changing sky—
Could chain the melody that's floating by—
Could make the scene perpetually so—
Bay—music—all—e'en to yon sail of snow!

The song has ceas'd, its mellow echo dies;
Then comes the rattle of an oar; and now,
The fisher's bark, freed from her moorings, flies,
Shaking the billows from her dripping prow,
Which seems to make the fresh sea-breeze a bow
As bending over to the freshening blast,
She dashes homeward, flitting swiftly past.

Aye: homeward went that bark, and the rude song,
From the swart boatman broke in wilder glee;—
He thought, perchance, as he drove swift along,
Of those who'd welcome from the treach'rous sea—
And there are those who think, perhaps, of me,
But from my lips to-night bursts no refrain,
I cannot echo, tho' I would, his strain.

And now the burning planets, one by one,
Gleam in the purple sky, and trembling, shine,
Where lately blaz'd the evening's setting sun.
And one flings far across the rolling brine
A golden thread—a lustrous, quiv'ring line,
As if 'twere fishîng; only think: a star
Forgetting its sublimity so far!

How strange it is! that e'en in saddest mood
Quaint thoughts *will* come, altho' it is not fit;
But sooth it is; a jackdaw did intrude
Once in a grass-grown grave-yard, he alit
Upon a headstone; what thereon was writ
I could not see for tears: and then he spoke—
So, that last thought upon my musings broke.

The star-light quivers, and the billows dash
In many a soft, and scintillating glow;
And the waves break beneath me, with a plash
Soft as a sylvan fountain's drowsy flow:
But even as I gaze, I start—for lo!
There rises where the shadow falleth dark,
The seaman's foe—the silent, deadly shark.

The Ishmael of Ocean's mystic deep:

He rose in silence; silently he goes—
Goes like a phantasy of fever'd sleep—
And now the water musically flows
Where late the fierce and savage monster rose;
And smiles the wave upon the stars above
As beauty smiles when burning eyes look love.

I do remember me, a day of mark—

Once, south of Cuba—'twas a startling thing!—
We caught a very giant of a shark,
And in his maw was found a jewell'd ring—
Rich as the gift of Oriental king:
And small; so that I almost felt unmann'd,
To see it fitted only woman's hand.

And when I this small, carvéd ring beheld,—

—The ring in fashion was both old and quaint,—
It brought me up a tragedy of eld,
A scene from which I turn'd both sad and faint—
It told of terror which made no complaint,
As some fair woman clung upon the deck
Of Spanish argosy speeding to wreck.

When — where, the lady died? Ah! who may tell?

What ocean-spirit can her fate reveal?

What wretched chance the gallant ship befell?

What sunken rock shatter'd her mighty keel?

In vain I ask — on all is set a seal —

The ring alone remaining tells no tale;

Whether she sank in battle, or the gale

Is a strange secret, and must ever be —

One of the millions which are darkly held

In the deep bosom of the mystic sea

So full of tragedies! A long list — swell'd

— A wondrous volume! — from the days of eld,

Down to this very eve — which has, perchance,

Seen the dark billows o'er some wretches glance.

REALITY.

YOUTH cast a brilliant horoscope:

I thought thro' life to ride —
My hand was on the mane of hope,
But ere I leap'd astride,
Fate tilted down upon me, and
I headlong roll'd upon the sand.

And tho' I rose again; I now

In dreams but little trust;
Dark care is on both lip and brow,
My feet are thick with dust —
With neither jest, nor laugh, nor song,
Full wearily, I toil along.

E'en young ambition's hawk, which I

Flung from my wrist, is dead;
Poor bird! it barely sought to fly,
Before its life had fled —
So, leaving grove, and grassy sod,
I, on the common highway, plod.

A SICK-MAN'S FANCIES

I AM weary, mother, weary
And my aching brow is hot.
Lay your hand upon my forehead
It will cool this burning spot,

That is burning, burning, burning
With a fierce and ceaseless pain—
I am weary, mother, weary,
I have overwrought my brain.

With my head upon your bosom,
I can lull myself to rest;
From my youth it was the pillow
That I ever lov'd the best!

Press your hand upon my forehead—

Press it harder—harder—so!

How its touch reminds me, mother,

Of the days gone long ago!

Of the vanish'd days, my mother,

When the world was fair to me—

When I bow'd down every evening

With my head upon your knee:

Said the little pray'r you taught me;

And then sank to dreamless rest,

With my head reposing, mother,

As this moment on your breast.

With my head thus resting, mother,

I can smile upon my fate;

Loving better those who love me

And forgiving those who hate.

Nay! then love it is no matter—

From the present I will turn:

Press your hand upon my forehead—

How my throbbing temples burn!

19*

As you wish it, I'll cease talking
Of those long, long-vanish'd years,
As I think of them, my mother,
I could weep most pleasant tears.

But I will not, it would pain you —
I will try, indeed, to sleep —
Though my clos'd eyes see before me
Flames that seem to dance and leap.

I will sleep in a fair palace
I can build such at my will;
And this grand and stately palace
With the fairest dreams I'll fill.

But first I'll say, dear mother,
If you'll hear me, that old pray'r;
Which I've said so often mother,
With your hand amid my hair.

And the lessons that you taught me —
To shun wrong and do the right —
With the pleasant tales you told me
All come back again to-night.

And....but mother, dearest mother,
Have my fancies made you weep?
Kiss me then upon the forehead,
And, indeed, I'll try to sleep.

TO MARY.

I asked of her a simple song,
And as her snowy fingers flew,
The music rose, now rich and strong,
Now low and plaintive grew.

Her soft voice in its mellow swell,
From the sweet prelude soared away;
Entranced I listened as it fell
A show'r of music spray.

I gazed upon her artless face,
And saw it dimpled o'er with smiles;
Ah! it was full of nameless grace
And girlhood's winning wiles.

The song she sang—a simple thing—
Since then has in my mem'ry been,
As sky lark lost on soaring wing
Is heard altho' unseen.

The song—a touching song indeed—
A loving woman's song of love—
Most rightly won my highest meed—
All songs it seem'd above!

And oh! her plaintive singing crept
Into my heart with such a tone,
That I had almost weakly wept
Had I but been alone.

“Dinna Forget!” she need not fear
That those who gaze upon her face,
Encompassed by her wealth of hair
Can ere forget its grace.

Ah me! that song—that simple song—
“Dinna Forget! Dinna Forget!”
Will linger in my mem'ry long—
A pleasure half regret.

Twill haunt me when the twilight's gloom
Creeps slowly o'er the purple sky,
As spices leave behind perfume
In only passing by.

The singer and the song will both
Recall that pleasant eve when we
Persuaded her to sing, tho loth—
She said she sang for *me*.

And I will think of Mary's song
When many a future sun has set—
E'en then the mem'ry will be strong
And I shall ne'er forget.

THE IRREVOCABLE PAST

IN the past, there are mournful shadows,
 With garlands about their brows—
They are pale—they are mournful spectres—
 Their garlands are cypress boughs.
Of these shadows, I see, ah! many:
 Let us count: there are twenty and five,
Which pallid, and spectre-like, wander
 Where billows eternally drive—
By a strand where the wreck-laden billows
 Rush up, on the desolate shore;
Where the billows in tumult, forever
 Send upward a dissonant roar

These shadows wear each one a garland,
—Such are sad unto me, and to you:—
Wear chaplets, which chaplets are heavy
With cypress and sad-color'd yew.
Yet, these chaplets were woven, my brother,
Of blooms which I fancied I knew—
And I dreamt not in twining these garlands,
Aught would mingle of sorrowful hue.
Ah! the blossoms look'd purple and golden,
Each one, what a sumptuous thing!
Great its splendor, alas! but that splendor,
The splendor of Autumn in Spring:
All the rich tints have vanish'd or faded,
Gone, tintings of purple and blue—
All the blossoms have faded and fallen—
They have left me but cypress and yew.
And these shadows that wear these dead garlands,
I can see them but dimly thro' tears,
Yet I know that these shadows are spectres,
Of twenty—and more—twenty years!

There are some whose pale faces are smiling;
But I turn from *their* smiles, feeling faint;
For I see on their lips, now, the crimson —
The cheating red left by the paint.
'Mid their garlands are grape-leaves and ivy,
These the years which wild pleasures embrac'd;
And they've marks on their garland-bound foreheads —
Deep marks which *cannot* be effac'd.

'Mid these shadows are two, which together
Are wandering there by the shore,
Which are fairer, tho' older, than any
That list while the dark billows roar;
Yet, their foreheads are graver and sadder —
Their eyes ever look on the ground,
What they've lost, they have lost, ah! forever,
It can never, ah! never be found;
Tho' they sought it for ages eternal,
With purpose, my brother, sublime,
What they've lost cannot now be recover'd —
'Twas precious indeed — it was TIME!
So, they wander amid a stern Carthage,
With sadness on forehead, and lips,

20

For of Hope all the triremes are stranded —

It is Carthage no longer “of ships.”

This the reason my soul looketh tearful

Aye! tearful, and sad, and aghast,

O'er the billows which ever are freighted

With terrible wrecks of the Past.

Yet arise, oh! sad soul, and remember,

This story, instructive, and old:

That new worlds unto Colon despairing,

A wreck on the billows foretold.

Let us shake off this sadness and sorrow —

This sadness, and sorrow, and pain;

Let us turn from these wrecks to discover

New fields beyond life's solemn main;

By this shore where such dark shadows hover,

Oh! let us no longer remain.

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